**RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES (SJS 215)**

**ASSIGNMENT**

**QUESTION**

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**16/SMS12/002**

Consider a religion that you are familiar with and discuss some of its beliefs, behaviours, and norms.  
Discuss how these meet social needs. Then research a religion that you don’t know much about.  
Explain how its beliefs, behaviours, and norms are like/unlike the other religion.

**CHRISTAINITY**

Christianity is an [Abrahamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrahamic_religions) [monotheistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotheism) [religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) based on the [life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_of_Jesus_in_the_New_Testament) and teachings of [Jesus Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus), who is the [focal point of the Christian faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_in_Christianity). It is the [world's largest religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups#Largest_religions), with over 2.4 billion followers, or 33% of the global population, known as [Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian). Christians make up a majority of the population in [158 countries and territories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_by_country). They believe that Jesus is the [Son of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God_(Christianity)) and the [saviour of humanity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity) whose coming as the [Messiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah) (the [Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_(title))) was prophesied in the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament). Christianity has played a [prominent role](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_Christianity_in_civilization) in the shaping of [Western civilization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_civilization)

Christianity grew out of [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) and began as a [Second Temple Judaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple_Judaism) sect in the mid-1st century. Originating in the [Roman province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_province) of [Judea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judea_(Roman_province)), it [quickly spread](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_centers_of_Christianity) to [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe), [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria_(region)), [Mesopotamia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamia), [Asia Minor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatolia), [Transcaucasia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcaucasia), [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), [Ethiopia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopia) and the [Indian subcontinent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_subcontinent), and by the end of the 4th century had become the official [state church of the Roman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_church_of_the_Roman_Empire). Following the [Age of Discovery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Discovery), Christianity spread to the [Americas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americas), [Oceania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oceania), [sub-Saharan Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa) and the rest of the world through work and [colonization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_colonialism).

There are many important differences of interpretation and opinion of the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) and [sacred tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_tradition) on which Christianity is based. Because of these irreconcilable differences in theology and a lack of consensus on the core tenets of Christianity, [Catholics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church), [Protestants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism) and [Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) often deny that members of certain other branches are Christians.

People who follow Christianity are called Christians and Judaism are called Jews. There are 14 millions of Jews living in Israel, Europe, USA and 2 billion of Christians are living in the Europe, North and South America, and rapidly growing in Africa.

Christianity is the first largest religious group while Judaism is the 12th largest group in the world. The clergies for Christianity are called priests, ministers, pastors and bishops and the clergy for Judaism is called rabbis.

Christians’ house of worships are church, chapel and cathedral and the main day of worship is Sunday. Jews’ house of worship is called synagogue and their main worship occurs on Saturdays.

These two major world religions are most similar to each other. Both Christianity and Judaism believe in one God who is holy, just, righteous, forgiving and merciful.

Both religions share Hebrew Scriptures ([the Old Testament](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-the-old-testament-and-new-testament/)) as a Word of God, but Christianity also includes the New Testament. They believe in heaven and hell as an eternal dwelling place for the righteous and for the wicked.

The difference between Christianity and Judaism is the Jesus Christ. [Christians](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-catholic-and-christian/) believes that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and he is the Savior.

Although Judaism recognizes Jesus as a good preacher and a prophet of god, it does not accept that Jesus is the Messiah or the Saviour.

Christianity believes that the God became a human being in the form of Jesus Christ and sacrificed his life to compensate the price for our sins while Judaism strongly disagrees that Jesus was God and laid his life for the human beings.

**PROVISION OF SOCIAL NEED**

The greatest social need in the world today is not HIV/AIDS outreach. It's not hunger. It's not global warming. Not ending poverty or eliminating malaria or tuberculosis. Not clean water. Not racial reconciliation. Not sexual trafficking. Not abortion. And it's not peace in the Middle East, and not even world peace.

These are not unimportant social issues. They grab the heart of God. God's compassion has always been focused on the poor and oppressed—something noted all through the Bible. So it's no surprise that God instructs his people to "learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause" (Isa. 1:17, ESV).

And they have grabbed the hearts of evangelicals in a fresh way. One telling example: A decade ago, it was still rare to find an evangelical church with an HIV/AIDS ministry. Today, one can hardly find an evangelical church that doesn't have or support one.

HIV/AIDS ministry is one book in a library of social action we have written recently. And it's been noticed. Just last February, we felt our chest swell with pride when New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof said:

Today, conservative Christian churches do superb work on poverty, AIDS, sex trafficking, climate change, prison abuses, malaria, and genocide in Darfur. … Today, many evangelicals are powerful internationalists and humanitarians.

Other examples abound in politics, foreign policy, and international justice. It's been quite a ride on the racehorse of social action.

Despite the advances, none of this constitutes our movement's greatest contribution to the world. None of these good works—nay, great works—deal with the most profound social problem facing humankind.

**HINDUISM**

Hinduism is an [Indian religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_religion), or a way of life, widely practiced in [South Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asia). Hinduism has been called the oldest religion in the world, and some practitioners and scholars refer to it as [Sanātana Dharma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San%C4%81tan%C4%AB" \o "Sanātanī), "the eternal tradition," or the "eternal way," beyond human history. Scholars regard Hinduism as a fusion or synthesis of various Indian cultures and traditions, with diverse roots and no founder. This "Hindu synthesis" started to develop between 500 BCE and 300 CE, following the [Vedic period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedic_period) (1500 BCE to 500 BCE).

Although Hinduism contains a broad range of philosophies, it is linked by shared concepts, recognisable rituals, [cosmology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_cosmology), [shared textual resources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_texts), and [pilgrimage to sacred sites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_pilgrimage_sites). [Hindu texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_texts) are classified into [Śruti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Aruti) ("heard") and [Smṛti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smriti" \o "Smriti) ("remembered"). These texts discuss theology, [philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_philosophy), [mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_mythology), [Vedic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedas) [yajna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yajna), [Yoga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga), [agamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80gama_(Hinduism)) [rituals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual), and [temple building](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_temple), among other topics. Major scriptures include the [Vedas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedas) and [Upanishads](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads), the [Bhagavad Gita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita), and the [Agamas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80gama_(Hinduism)). Sources of authority and eternal truths in its texts play an important role, but there is also a strong Hindu tradition of the questioning of this authority, to deepen the understanding of these truths and to further develop the tradition.

Prominent themes in Hindu beliefs include the four [Puruṣārthas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puru%E1%B9%A3%C4%81rtha), the proper goals or aims of human life, namely [Dharma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma) (ethics/duties), [Artha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artha) (prosperity/work), [Kama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kama)(desires/passions) and [Moksha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha) (liberation/freedom/salvation); [karma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karma) (action, intent and consequences), [Saṃsāra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sa%E1%B9%83s%C4%81ra" \o "Saṃsāra) (cycle of rebirth), and the various [Yogas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga" \o "Yoga) (paths or practices to attain moksha). Hindu practices include rituals such as [puja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puja_(Hinduism)) (worship) and recitations, meditation, family-oriented [rites of passage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskara_(rite_of_passage)), annual festivals, and occasional pilgrimages. Some Hindus leave their social world and material possessions, then engage in lifelong [Sannyasa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sannyasa" \o "Sannyasa) (monastic practices) to achieve Moksha. Hinduism prescribes the eternal duties, such as honesty, refraining from injuring living beings ([ahimsa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahimsa)), patience, forbearance, self-restraint, and compassion, among others. The four largest [denominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_denominations) of Hinduism are the [Vaishnavism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishnavism), [Shaivism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaivism), [Shaktism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaktism) and [Smartism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smarta_Tradition).

Hinduism is the [world's third largest religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups); its followers, known as [Hindus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu), number about [1.15 billion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_by_country), or 15-16% of the global population. Hindus form the majority of the population in [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal) and [Mauritius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritius). Significant Hindu communities are also found in [other countries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_by_country).

Hinduism includes a diversity of ideas on [spirituality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality#Hinduism) and traditions, but has no ecclesiastical order, no unquestionable religious authorities, no governing body, no prophet(s) nor any binding holy book; Hindus can choose to be polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic, monistic, agnostic, atheistic or humanist. Because of the wide range of traditions and ideas covered by the term Hinduism, arriving at a comprehensive definition is difficult. The religion "defies our desire to define and categorize it". Hinduism has been variously defined as a religion, a religious tradition, a set of religious beliefs, and "a way of life." From a Western lexical standpoint, Hinduism like other faiths is appropriately referred to as a religion. In India the term dharma is preferred, which is broader than the western term religion.

The study of India and its cultures and religions, and the definition of "Hinduism", has been shaped by the interests of colonialism and by Western notions of religion. Since the 1990s, those influences and its outcomes have been the topic of debate among scholars of Hinduism and have also been taken over by critics of the Western view on India.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHRISTAINITY AND HINDUISM**

[Christianity](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-christianity-and-judaism/) is a belief in Jesus Christ, who was crucified two thousand years ago on Calvary, Jerusalem, which is now spread all over the world. Hinduism is a religion which is confessed by 70% of the Indian population, but it also has adepts in other countries too. Now, let’s remember that Christianity is the world’s larger religion, while Hinduism is number 3. The main difference between these 2 religions is that Christianity recognizes one omnipotent God in three persons, while Hinduism has in its roots thousands of gods and believing that all of them are a manifestation of one god and one omnipotent power.

Another major difference between Hinduism and all other religions (including [Christianity](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-buddhism-and-christianity/)) is that Hinduism is an ‘evolving religion’. Its rituals progress. A religion which does not have a founder, like Jesus Christ who is the central and vital part of Christianity. So you can’t find a point in time when Hinduism first began, or when it’s spiritual practices first started.

A big and interesting difference in the attitudes of these religions and their followers is the fact that Hinduism tolerates [Christianity](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-sikhism-and-christianity/) while Christianity is totally opposed to Hinduism because any other form of worship that is not approved by the Bible is an anathema and a sin to the Christian world. The Hindu people live by a principle similar to ‘All roads lead to the top of the mountain’, while Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to get to Heaven, believing that ‘there is salvation outside a denomination, but there’s no salvation outside God’s sacrifice: Jesus Christ’. Christians believe that there will be a final Judgment Day when each one of us will answer before God for all our actions, [Hindus believe that each person](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/culture-miscellaneous/difference-between-diwali-and-deepavali/) is judged and punished by his own karma.

A distinctive belief at Hindus is they believe that everything possesses a part of God, therefore God persists in both good and evil. Christians believe that God did not create evil, but instead, He created mankind free to choose, and that freedom includes the possibility of doing wrong.

**Summary:**

* While in Hinduism, it is believed that all the roads lead to salvation, in Christianity, they believe that Bible is the answer to all problems.
* Christians believe in Jesus Christ while Hindus believe in a multitude of Gods.
* Origins of Hinduism cannot be traced as it is an extremely old religion, while that of Christianity can be traced to approximately two thousand years.

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