




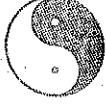








# Comparing World Religions and Ethical Systems

	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Confucianism
						
<b>Followers worldwide</b> (estimated 2005 figures)	379 million	2.1 billion	860 million	1.3 billion	15.1 million	6.5 million
<b>Name of god</b>	no god	God	Brahman	Allah	God	no god
<b>Founder</b>	the Buddha	Jesus	no founder	no founder but spread by Muhammad	Abraham	Confucius
<b>Holy book</b>	many sacred books, including the Dhammapada	Bible, including Old Testament and New Testament	many sacred texts, including the Upanishads	Qur'an	Hebrew Bible, including the Torah	<i>Analects</i>
<b>Clergy</b>	Buddhist monks	priests, ministers, monks, and nuns	Brahmin priests, monks, and gurus	no clergy but a scholar class, called the ulama, and imams, who may lead prayers	rabbis	no clergy
<b>Basic beliefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Followers can achieve enlightenment by understanding the Four Noble Truths and by following the Noble Eightfold Path of right opinions, right desires, right speech, right action, right jobs, right effort, right concentration, and right meditation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>Jesus is the Son of God. He died to save humanity. His death and resurrection made eternal life possible for others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The soul never dies but is continually reborn until it becomes divinely enlightened.</li> <li>Persons achieve happiness and divine enlightenment after they free themselves from their earthly desires.</li> <li>Freedom from earthly desires comes from many lifetimes of worship, knowledge, and virtuous acts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>Persons achieve salvation by following the Five Pillars of Islam and living a just life. The pillars are faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>God loves and protects his people but also holds people accountable for their sins and shortcomings.</li> <li>Persons serve God by studying the Torah and living by its teachings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social order, harmony, and good government should be based on strong family relationships.</li> <li>Respect for parents and elders is important to a well-ordered society.</li> <li>Education is important for the welfare of both the individual and society.</li> </ul>

Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica Almanac, 2006*

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