

Homework

For your chosen religion you must:

- 1) Read the passage on your religion and be prepared to explain to others what that religion is about, and think about the religion from your own knowledge of it
- 2) Read the prayers but do not start saying them yet
- 3) Summarise the beliefs of that religion in one sentence
- 4) Write down the meaning of the mantra

If you need any more help you can go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>

You should ask your parents to help you do this homework

You will be saying what you write for task numbers 3 and 4 on stage at Wolverhampton

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Prayers

Jain Prayers

NAMO ARIHANTANAM

I bow to the Arihantas, the perfected human beings, Godmen.

NAMO SIDDHANAM

I bow to the Siddhas, liberated bodiless souls, God.

NAMO AIRIYANAM

I bow to the Acharyas, the masters and heads of congregations.

NAMO UVAJJHAYANAM

I bow to the Upadhyayas, the spiritual teachers.

NAMO LOE SAVVA SAHUNAM

I bow to the spiritual practitioners in the universe, Sadhus.

ESO PANCA NAMOKARO

This five-fold obeisance mantra,

SAVVA PAVAPANASNO

Destroys all sins and obstacles,

MANGALANAMCA SAVVESIM

And of all auspicious repetitions,

PADHAMAM HAVAI MANGALAM

Is the first and foremost

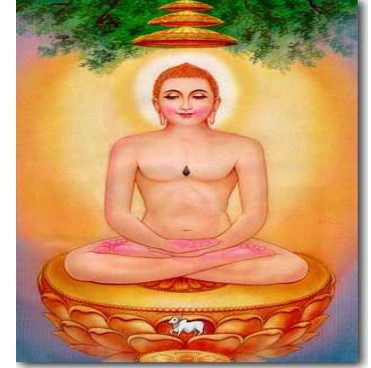


Image Source:

<http://www.mahavir.com/>

Founder Mahavira Jainism, in contrast to Hinduism, is based upon a founder and leader known as Mahavira. This name actually is an honorific title signifying "great man." Tradition places the birth of Mahavira at 599 B.C. in northeastern India, which would make him a contemporary of Buddha. Tradition also relates that Mahavira was the second son of a rajah living in luxurious surroundings. He married and had one daughter. When his parents died, Mahavira decided at the age of 30 to live a life of self-denial, pledging to deny himself the care of his body and not to speak for 12 years. After a short time, Mahavira put off the robe he wore and wandered naked through India receiving injuries from both man and beast. He wandered for 12 years until he reached enlightenment at the age of 42.

The Sacred Books of the East record, "During the thirteenth year, in a squatting position ... exposing himself to the heat of the sun ... with knees high and the head low, in deep meditation, in the midst of abstract meditation he reached nirvana, the complete and full, the unobstructed, infinite absolute" (F. M. Mueller, ed., Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22, Oxford: Krishna Press, 1879-1910, p. 201).

After reaching enlightenment, Mahavira stopped living by himself and took on disciples, preaching his new-found belief. So he continued to live until the end of his life, at which time he was said to have over 14,000 monks in his brotherhood (Maurice Rawlings, Life-Wish: Reincarnation: Reality or Hoax, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1981, p. 63).

The Principles of Jainism:

Among the sacred books of Jainism, the 12 angas hold the foremost position. In the second anga, called sutra-keit-anga, the following sayings are contained which give insight into the nature of Jainism:

Know what causes the bondage of the soul; and knowing, try to remove it.

All things are eternal by their very nature.

As imprisoned birds do not get out of their cage, so those ignorant of right or wrong do not get out of their misery.

There are three ways of committing sins: by our actions; by authorizing others, and by approval.

A sage leads a life as far removed from love as from hate.

All living beings hate pain: therefore do not injure them or kill them. This is the essence of wisdom: not to kill

anything.

Leave off pride, anger, deceit and greed.

Men suffer individually for the deeds they themselves have done.

The wise man should consider that not he alone suffers; all creatures in the world suffer.

Conceit is a very thin thorn; it is difficult to pull out.

No man should seek fame and respect by his austerities.

A man should treat all creatures in the world as he himself would like to be treated.

He who is purified by meditation is like a ship in the water that avoids all dangers until it reaches the shore.

Do not maintain that there is no such thing as good or evil, but that there is good and evil.

(from: http://www.greatcom.org/resources/handbook_of_todays_religions/03chap02/default.htm)

Buddhist Prayers



Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Sangham Saranam Gacchami
Dharmam Saranam Gacchami
Buddham-Sangham-Dharmam

"Make an effort to see the same divine principle everywhere and in everything, until you realize the ultimate truth, that only the Atma exists, that only the Self is real."

Buddha taught the same great truth, although he may not have made reference to Veda or used Vedantic terms, nevertheless, he experienced and demonstrated the essential spirit of Veda. First he said, 'Buddham, Sharanam Gacchami', meaning, 'I take refuge in the Buddhi, my power of discrimination.' This deals with the individual; it speaks of the limited personality. Gradually, he added, 'Sangham Sharanam Gacchami', meaning, 'I take refuge in the community, I take refuge in the society.' He recognized that feelings associated with individual and personal considerations are selfish and narrow, and cannot take you very far.

You should not consider this individual self as everything; it is only a drop in the ocean. Along these lines, Krishna also commanded, "Arjuna, expand your heart. Become broadminded. Include the entire society within your scope." Society does not have any particular form; it is made up of individuals. When a large number of individuals join together they become a society. Swami often say, 'Expansion is My life'. When you expand individual life to infinity it becomes divinity; that is to say, let individual life multiply and broaden and it will eventually reach divinity. Therefore, Krishna told Arjuna, "Live in the society; serve the society; and develop broadmindedness."

The meaning of society in one country may be different from that in another; and a society or community called by one name may have nothing to do with a society or community called by another name. So, you will find that there are limits even for a society, and that the society by itself will not take you all the way to infinity. Therefore, Buddha added one more step, 'Dharmam Sharanam Gacchami', meaning, 'I take refuge in Dharma, I take shelter in truth and righteousness'. Dharma, as used here, has a very broad connotation; it refers to the one who supports the entire world. When you investigate the general meaning of the word Dharma, you find that it relates to the basic nature of a thing; its essential truth. The 'thing' referred to here is the immortal Atma, the indwelling divinity. Therefore, the deeper meaning of Dharma is found in the true nature of divinity. To take refuge in Dharma is to become one with the attributes of divinity. It has been said that Maya is the body of God, but it is more correct to say that Dharma is the body of God. It is His very form. That is why Krishna announced, 'For establishing Dharma I have come again and again.' Dharma reveals the broad nature of divinity in all its glorious aspects.

In a life filled with desires, the pleasures one seeks are inevitably followed by grief and disappointments. All unrighteous actions lead to sorrow. It was for this reason that Buddha emphasized the need for discrimination. The first prayer, "Buddham Saranam Gacchami" is a call for cultivating wisdom and discriminations - the Buddhi. But unless the power of discrimination is used for doing right action for the good of society it is of no use. Hence the second prayer, "Sangham Saranam Gacchami" (I surrender myself to society). What is this right action that must be done? That is indicated by the third prayer: "Dharmam Saranam Gacchami" (I take refuge in Dharma). To reach your goal, the royal road is Dharma - Righteousness. It is only when these are combined - Wisdom, Social Service and Righteousness - that there is fulfilment in life.

BHAGAVAD GITA DISCOURSES

by Baba

Image and text from : <http://www.saibaba.ws/teachings/buddha/buddha.htm>

Muslim Prayers (Image and text from: <http://saitowers.com/spi/magazine/julaug2001/prayerformuslim.htm>)

Bismillaa hir Rahmaanir Rahim



1. Al Hamdu lillaahi Rabbil Aalameen
2. Ar Rahamaanir Rahim
3. Maaliki Yav middeen
4. Iyyaaka nabudu Va Iyyaaka nasta een
5. Ihdinas siraatal mustakeem
6. Siraatalla zeena an amta alai him
7. Gairil magzubi alaihim va lazzaalleen

Meaning: In the name of Allah, the most beneficent and merciful

1. All praise be to Allah, the most just ruler of the worlds
2. The most beneficent and merciful
3. The Lord of the day of judgement
4. You alone we worship; you alone we ask for help.
5. Show us the straight path
6. The path of those whom you have favoured
7. Not (the path) of those who earn your anger or of those who go astray

Notes:

Before the time of Prophet Mohammad, Arabs used the phrase 'Bismillah' only, which meant 'In the name of Allah'. At that time people believed that Allah was supposed not to be very responsive to personal problems and prayers. But the prophet described God as the most beneficent and merciful (Rahmaanir Rahim), quite sensitive to our problems and responsive to our prayers. Such a perception of God was more conducive to develop an intimacy and relationship with God and Islam grew into a great religion closely knitting large sections of humanity.

1. In the first sentence of this prayer, the devotee recognises the presence of the hand of God behind all that is successful and praiseworthy. God's grace is the main switch and man's effort is the room switch. Without the main switch on, putting on the room switch is of no avail. It is interesting to note a similar conviction in the Bhagawad Gita (18:78) and in the Bible (Book of Job etc).
2. The idea of the day of judgement is common to Hinduism (Refer Chitragupta's records of all our actions and the judgement by Yama) as well as to Christianity (corroborated by modern discoveries in parapsychology).
3. The sole dependence on God by the devotee is again a common feature in the principal religions.
4. The straight path is also known as the narrow path in Christianity and as the razor's edge in Hinduism. It is difficult to walk along it but the reward is worth all the effort. As the Gita says it is like poison in the beginning and like nectar in the end.
5. The last part of this prayer is an echo of the last part of Lord's prayer in the Bible, which says 'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.'

Christian prayers



Our father who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For thy is the kingdom the power and the glory
Forever and ever amen
(Mathew 6:9-13)

Christ's basic teachings were related to promotion of compassion, sympathy, love, sacrifice and fellowship among human beings. Jesus was named the Christ as he was regarded as the "chosen" messenger of God. Baba
Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 25-12-1991.

The essence of this prayer is a reverence for God and the ability to forgive

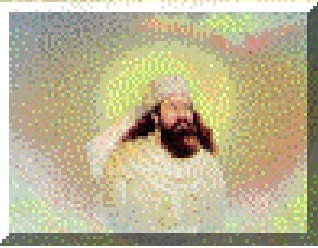
The Peace Prayer

Lord,
Make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light, and
Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and
It is in dying that we are born to eternal
life.

In the Tradition of the Teachings of St. Francis of Assisi

Zoroastrian Prayers



**Ashem¹ Vohu² Vashistem³ asti⁴
Ushtā⁵ asti,⁶ Ushtā⁷ ahmāi,⁸
Hyat⁹ ashāi¹⁰ Vahishtāi¹¹ ashem.¹²**

Righteousness¹ is⁴ the best³ good²
(and it) is⁶ happiness.⁵
Happiness⁷ (is) to him,⁸ who⁹ (is) righteous¹²
for the sake of the best¹¹ righteousness.¹⁰

Image and text from: <http://www.zoroaster.com/avesta/ashem%20vohu.htm>

[Extracted from Bhagavn Baba's Discourses]

Zoroastrianism, the Parsi religion was founded by Zoraster, who wanted that man should always have the fire of wisdom blazing in his consciousness so that evil thoughts and tendencies might be reduced to ashes. It has to infuse all thoughts, words and deeds with the illumination of virtue and vigor. It must destroy all worldly desire and render man pure for entry into the heaven of freedom. Adoration, meditation and acts of selfless service are essential for the dawn of enlightenment. The religion of Parsis consider the highest Truth as "I am the Light" and "The Light is in me".

They are called Fire worshippers. Agni is a symbol of purity. Zoroastrians worship the sun who stands for illumination and purity. They must follow four purities - pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds and pure chastity.

From: <http://www.eaisai.com/baba/docs/zoro.html>

The founder of zoroastrianism is Zarathustra and the symbol for this religion is the fire vessel, God in Zoroastrianism is called Ahura Mazda

Jewish Prayers

Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad.

Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

Barukh Shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va-ed

Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever

Jews believe in the idea of chosen people, thereby they must set an example to mankind. They believe that they should obey laws set down in the torah

The Relationship with God

Jews believe that there is a single God who not only created the universe, but with whom every Jew can have an individual and personal relationship.

They believe that God continues to work in the world, affecting everything that people do.

The Jewish relationship with God is a covenant relationship.

In exchange for the many good deeds that God has done and continues to do for the Jewish People...

- The Jews keep God's laws
- The Jews seek to bring holiness into every aspect of their lives.

Judaism is the Faith of a Community

Jews believe that God appointed the Jews to be his chosen people in order to set an example of holiness and ethical behavior to the world.

Jewish life is very much the life of a community and there are many activities that Jews must do as a community.

- For example, the Jewish prayer book uses WE and OUR in prayers where some other faiths would use I and MINE.

Jews also feel part of a global community with a close bond Jewish people all over the world. A lot of Jewish religious life is based around the home and family activities.

Judaism is a Family Faith

Judaism is very much a family faith and the ceremonies start early, when a Jewish boy baby is circumcised at eight days old, following the instructions that God gave to Abraham around 4,000 years ago.

Many Jewish religious customs revolve around the home. One example is the Sabbath meal, when families join together to welcome in the special day

From <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/beliefs/index.shtml>

Sikh Prayers

Mul mantra



Ek onkar satnam karta purukh, nirbhau, nirvair, akal murat, ajuni, saibham, Gurprasad.

It can be paraphrased, but is believed to be beyond translation. "One true and universal creator, all powerful, without fear and without hatred. God is eternal and infinite. Self-existent and known only by grace."

(Image Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world_religions/sikhism_az2.shtml)

The Mul Mantra appears at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji before the "Jap" (known as Jap Ji Sahib). The Mul Mantra contains the basic concepts relating to Almighty God, Waheguru and is the epitome of the Sikh Faith. We all have read and heard this important Gurbani many times, but we need to understand and think about the important message it conveys and to act upon these teachings in everyday life.

"Ek-Onkaar" - God is One. The fact that the Guru Granth Sahib starts with the numeral "1" (1) emphasises the Oneness of God and the importance of this teaching. It is an Absolute value. The word "Onkaar" means that God manifests himself throughout his creation yet. Ek - God is One, for all people no matter their religion, caste or colour.

"SatNaam" - The True Name. "Sat" means True or Real and everlasting and Naam means Name but also infers the Essence of God. This Divine Essence is formless, colourless and is present in all Creation. So God is True and is immanent in all beings.

"Karta Purakh" - The Supreme Creator. Karta - God is the Creator, and Purakh - is immanent in His Creation and fills all beings. This also represents Power, God is the all Powerful Creator.

"Nirbhau". He is without fear. Fear is only possible if there is another being to be afraid of, God is absolute, who is He to be afraid of? There is also no opposite to God (like Satan).

"Nirvair". God is inimical to none, God has no enemies, again as he is the sole Supreme being who is he to have hatred or ill-feeling against?

"Akaal Murat". God does not die, always exists. God is Eternal, Infinite.

"Ajooni". He is never born. He is above the circle of reincarnation and there is none before him.

"Saibhang". He is self-illuminated - he is from himself, is self-existent and self-sufficient.

"Gur Prasad". He is realised by the kindness of the True Guru. One cannot claim Him, that is not our right.

This is opening of the Guru Granth Sahib and is followed by the first Salok and then by the Jap.

So the central Sikh teaching about God emphasises again and again the Oneness of God and his unique position in the Universe. It also tells us in the last line that God can be realised by all, and is not unattainable. To find him, one has to absorb oneself in His Name. This is what Guru Nanak calls as "Jap". Call Him with deep love and devotion and He will manifest Himself to you.

Guru Nanak taught us to live within society and criticised those who left society behind to meditate in order to reach God. He said we should all meditate and remember God in our daily lives. This will motivate us to act

righteously. As such Guru Nanak has given us a clear purpose of life. This is the Goal of merging with God through truthful living and remembering God's name.

(Source: <http://www.bsingh.dsl.pipex.com/khalsa/news2.htm>)

Hindu Prayers



AUM

Aum is the sound of the creation. (When the Elements originated and Creation started, the sound Om was produced.) By chanting Aum, we are awakening the God within us. The chanting generates spiritual vibrations that purify the atmosphere in the classroom and simultaneously lifts the child's mind to a higher level.

A – stands for Brahma the creator, it also represents the waking state of consciousness (Jagrath)

U – stands for Vishnu the protector or sustainer, it also represents the dream state (Swapna)

M - stands for Maheshwara (or Shiva) the Destroyer and also represents the deep sleep state (Sushupti)

The creative, protective and destructive forces are found everywhere in the universe.

Aum also shows how conscious we are of who we are, As we are God it shows the stages of being aware of God. As a whole word when said together it shows that we are trying to go beyond the three stages of consciousness to Turiya – the highest state of consciousness where you are aware you are God.

Aum bhoorbhuvaha swaaha

Thath savithur varenyam

Bhargo dhevasya dheemahi

Dhiyo yonaha prachodhayath

May the supreme light that illumines the three worlds illumine our intellect and direct our intelligence to the path of virtue

THE Gaayathri (Vedhic prayer to illuminate the intellect) is the Universal prayer enshrined in the Vedhas (Divine Knowledge), the most ancient scriptures of man. It is addressed to the Immanent and Transcendent Divine which has been given the name 'Savitha,' meaning 'that from which all this is born.' The Gaayathri may be considered as having three parts---(i) Praise (ii) Meditation (iii) Prayer. First the Divine is praised, then It is meditated upon in reverence and finally an appeal is made to the Divine to awaken and strengthen the intellect, the discriminating faculty of man.

The Gaayathri is considered as Vedhasaara---"the essence of the Vedhas." Vedha means knowledge, and this prayer fosters and sharpens the knowledge-yielding faculty. As a matter of fact the four Mahaavaakyas or 'core-declarations' enshrined in the four Vedhas are implied in this Gaayathri manthra.

Every human being has four birthdays

The *Gaayathri* is usually repeated at dawn, midnight and dusk. But God being beyond time, it is a result of our limitations that we talk of dawn and dusk. When we move away from the Sun it is dusk; when we move into the light of the Sun it is dawn. So you need not be bound by the three points of time to recite the prayer. It can be repeated always and everywhere, only one has to ensure that the mind is pure. I would advise you young people to recite it when you take your bath. Do not sing cheap and defiling film songs. Recite the *Gaayathri*. When you bathe, the body is being cleansed; let your mind and intellect also be cleansed. Make it a point to repeat it when you bathe as well as before every meal, when you wake from sleep and when you go to bed. And also repeat '*Shaanthi*' thrice at the end, for that repetition will give *Shaanthi* or peace to three entities in you---body, mind and soul. Every human being has four birthdays. The first is when he emerges from his mother's womb and, being neither holy nor unholy, craves only for food and shelter; the second is when he begins his spiritual study to lead him from darkness to light; the third is when he has gained wisdom, having mastered the disciplines propounded by the *rishis* for achieving self-realisation; the fourth and last is when he realises his true identity and merges with *Brahman*.

Never give up the Gaayathri manthra

The yajnopaveetham (sacred thread) is a symbol of purity which is necessary if you wish to participate in the yajna of Living. Life is a continuous series of sacrifices of the lower for the sake of the higher, of the tiny in favour of the vast. Upanayana, the word which has been given to this ceremony of Initiation, means the conferment of another eye. Your two eyes cannot reveal to you the magnificence and the majesty of the realm of the spirit. They are focussed towards the objective world and its transient attractions. So the Gaayathri manthra has been given to you as a third eye to reveal to you that inner vision by which you may realise Brahman.

Gaayathri is a treasure you must guard throughout your lives. If you have not caught the sounds of the manthra correctly now, learn it from your parents or from your family priest. Perhaps the others may not know the Gaayathri themselves or they might have forgotten it through culpable neglect. Then I would ask them to learn it from you.

Never give up the Gaayathri; you may give up or ignore any other manthra but you should recite the Gaayathri at least a few times a day. It will protect you from harm wherever you are--- travelling, working or at home. Westerners have investigated the vibrations produced by this manthra and have found that when it is recited with the correct accent as laid down in the Vedhas, the atmosphere around becomes visibly illumined. So Brahmaprakaasha, the effulgence of divine will descend on you and illumine your intellect and light your path when this manthra is chanted. Gaayathri is Annapoorna, the Mother, the sustaining Force that animates all life. So do not neglect it. Elders and priests, manthra, have given it the custodians of this the go-by. But you, as Inheritors and guardians of the great culture of this country, have a great responsibility in preserving it and demonstrating its efficacy and worth.

Upanayanam Day, Brindhaavan, 20-6-1977

Hinduism believes in one god that takes many forms, it believes that God is present in everything. It believes in karma (the law of action and reaction and of rebirth), it believes that God incarnates on the earth in very age. It believes in spiritual practice or sadhana.

It believes in atma: **Atma is a part of God that exists within us all. It is like drops of water in the ocean they are still individual drops but the drops are part of the ocean. It is not made and can never be destroyed.**

SARVA DHARMA PRAYERS

**Om Tat Sat Sri Narayana Tu
Purushottama Guru Tu
Siddha Buddha Tu Skanda Vinayaka
Savita Pavaka Tu
Brahma Mazda Tu Yahve Shakti Tu
Ishu Pita Prabhu Tu
Rudra Vishnu Tu Rama Krishna Tu
Rahima Tao Tu
Vasudeva Go-Vishvarupa Tu
Chidananda Hari Tu
Advitiya Tu Akala Nirbhaya
Atmalinga Shiva Tu
Om, Thou art that, Thou art Narayana,**


God in the form of man;
Thou art the Embodiment of perfection and the perfect master.
Thou art enlightened Buddha;
Thou art Subramanya and Ganesha, the remover of obstacles;
Thou art the Sun-fire;
Thou art Brahma, the Creator;
Mazda, the Great One;
Thou art Jehovah and the Divine Mother, the creative Energy.
O Lord! Thou art the Father of Jesus.
Thou art Rudra, the Transformer, and Vishnu, the Preserver;
Thou art Rama and Krishna;
Thou art Rahim, all kindness, always giving and expanding;
Thou art the Tao.
Thou art Vasudeva, the Sustenance of all, omnipotent and
omnipresent;
Thou art Hari, Destroyer of illusion, the blissful Spirit.
Thou art unparalleled, beyond time and fearless of adversities;
Thou art Shiva, Creator of the lingam, Symbol of the formless
Absolute


"Sahanaa vavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavaavahai" (Let us live
together; let us
struggle together; let us grow together in joy and harmony). This was the
teaching of the Vedas.


Lokaa samstaa sukhino bhavantu – may all beings be happy always


Let the different faiths exist, let them flourish, and let the glory of God be sung in all the languages and in a variety of tunes. That should be the Ideal. Respect the differences between the faiths and recognize them as valid as long as they do not extinguish the flame of unity.


Sathya Sai Baba

 **Hindu Om:** Listen to the primeval *Pranava* (Om) resounding in your heart as well as in the heart of the Universe.

 **Buddhist wheel:** Remember the wheel of cause and consequence, of deed and destiny, and the wheel of *dharma* that rights them all.

 **Zoroastrian fire symbol:** Offer all bitterness in the sacred fire and emerge grand, great, and godly.

 **Islamic crescent and star:** Be like the star, which never wavers from the crescent but is fixed in steady faith.

 **Christian cross:** Cut the "I" feeling clean across and let your ego die on the cross, to endow on you Eternity.