

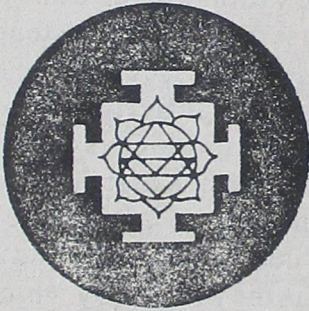


Jainism

Jainism

Jains believe that the universe is uncreated and eternal. They are divided between two realities, jivas and ajivas. Jivas are souls. Ajivas are physical matter.

A Jain's salvation comes through the soul's active desire and labor for its own release. Every Jain is expected to revere life, for beneath the karma that distinguishes individual creatures, humans and animals are the same.



Hinduism

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Hinduism includes not only theology, but also social institutions, a legal tradition, a vast body of literature and art, and a great and varied mass of philosophy. Hinduism has no formalized creeds nor standardized forms of worship.

There are four goals of Hinduism: karma, a life in search of pleasures; artha, the pursuit of politics; dhama, life according to the duties of their castes; and moshku, seeking the release from the wheel of rebirth because one is tired of other pursuits.



Islam

Islam Religion

Muslims think that God created a good world. Having been created, it is not eternal. It is sustained by the will of God, but God is not coursing through it as sap through a vine.

The world is made for humans to enjoy. Food is good. Drink, other than alcohol, is generally good. Comfortable clothing and shelter are good. Marriage is expected. Sex and procreation are good. Having property and wealth is good, so long as believers remember to share with those in need. The world is a wonderful place, a kind of preview of conditions that can be found in even purer form in the next life.

Shamanism

In Shamanism, the shaman, or officiant goes into a trance state and is believed possessed by a spirit control that speaks and acts through him. The shaman is responsible for the well-being of the territorial kin group. The position is often inherited, but the final choice is made by the spirits who inform a candidate of their interest during his first trance experience. Some duties of the shaman are diagnosing and curing illness, finding lost property, and foretelling the future. The Shaman also officiates at the re-interment ceremonies for the dead held every few years. In such religious contexts, the shaman is a respected priest and moral arbiter through whom the people can communicate with the spirits and gods.

Shamanism has very ancient roots in China. In the early 20th century, shamans believed to be possessed by minor deities of the town participated in community ceremonies. There were also shamanesses with a clientele of unhappy girls and subordinate wives who had become possessed.

In Japan, the priests of some Shinto and Buddhist sects were shamans or shamanesses licensed after purificatory rites.