

Major Beliefs of the World—Unit 2

Religion	Important Writings	God, Gods, or Spirits	Afterlife	Rituals	Principal Branches	Ethics/Morals
Hinduism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vedas • Puranas • <i>Ramayana</i> • <i>Mahabharata</i> 	Many deities represent one supreme spirit, Brahman.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reincarnation • The Law of Karma • Moksha 	Rituals take place in homes and in temples. They include practicing yoga, worshipping deities, and undertaking pilgrimages to holy sites.	Four major sects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaishnavism • Shaivism • Shaktism • Smartism Religions from Hinduism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism 	Hinduism teaches obedience to one's dharma. The most important practices are purity, self-control, detachment, truth, and non-violence.
Buddhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tripitaka</i> (Three Baskets) 	There is no supreme God. Gods and spirits are worshipped in some yana (schools). The Buddha is not considered a god, nor is he prayed to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attaining nirvana is the ultimate goal of Buddhism • Reincarnation • Multiple Heavens and Hells 	Meditation is a core ritual. Other rituals involve worshipping deities and chanting mantras, depending on the schools.	Three yana (schools or vehicles): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theravada • Mahayana • Vajrayana 	Following the Noble Eightfold Path helps believers attain nirvana.
Confucianism	Written by disciples of Confucius: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lun-yü</i> (Analects) • <i>Wu Ching</i> (The Five Classics) 	Some Confucians believe in gods and spirits. Ancestor-worship is a central belief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discussed 	Rituals help people practice the ethics and morals of Confucianism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	Moral standards include sincerity, respect for one's father and ruler, and virtue as the basis of personal dignity and political order.
Taoism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tao Te Ching</i> • <i>Chuang-Tzu</i> 	Deities are deeply involved in the daily lives of believers. Priests act as intermediaries between believers and deities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No afterlife 	The ultimate goal of Taoism is to achieve immortality. Believers meditate, regulate breathe, recite scriptures, and go on special diets to attain immortality and longevity.	Three major branches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophical • Physical • Shamanistic 	Performing good acts is not emphasized. Instead, being a good person and living in harmony with people and nature are the focus of Taoist ethics.