

Chapter 1

Studying Eastern Religion

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The three levels of the world are earth, sky, and _____.
a) mountains
b) sea
c) underworld
d) mesas

C, p. 7

2. The *axis mundi* is the symbolic link connecting _____.
a) man and ghosts
b) man and god
c) heaven and hell
d) earth and sky

D, p. 11

3. In Japan, features of the natural landscape were believed to be _____.
a) Earth-mother given
b) kami
c) created by volcanoes
d) god-made

B, p. 7

4. According to your textbook, in ancient times, the living were willing to sacrifice _____ to help the dead.
a) everything
b) humans
c) nothing
d) resources

D, p. 8

5. Because of religion, another name for humans is _____.
a) *Homo erectus*
b) *Homo iousian*
c) *Homo religiosus*
d) *Homo sapiens*

C, p. 9

6. Another word for witchdoctor is _____.
- a) *shaman*
 - b) *magus*
 - c) *brahman*
 - d) *rishi*

A, p. 9

7. Various hunting rituals show that people believed that the spirit of the killed animal or person _____.
- a) brings disease
 - b) brings compassion
 - c) survives death
 - d) seeks revenge

C, p. 10

8. Many cultures believed that uninhabited areas were _____.
- a) wastelands
 - b) guarded by spirits
 - c) beloved by the gods
 - d) to be exploited

B, p. 10

9. One way to deal with unfriendly spirits is to _____.
- a) take flight
 - b) exorcise them
 - c) neglect them
 - d) frighten them

D, p. 11

10. To communicate with the spirit world, the shaman enters _____.
- a) a drugged state
 - b) a trance
 - c) a dance
 - d) a tent

B., p. 9

11. People in the Neolithic era went to extraordinary lengths to _____.
- a) paint on cave walls
 - b) employ "royal" shamans
 - c) practise hunting magic

- d) create sacred areas

D, p. 11

12. One very important function of Neolithic-era priests was to _____.
- a) baptize
 - b) track the seasons
 - c) hear confessions
 - d) say mass

B, p. 11

13. One of the powerful reasons for human religion suggested by your textbook is _____.
- a) joy of death
 - b) fear of sin
 - c) idea of an afterlife
 - d) fear of Satan

C, p. 11

14. The Hindu goddess Durga is often depicted riding _____.
- a) a wolf
 - b) a dragon
 - c) a lion or a tiger
 - d) a makara or a peacock

C, p. 12

15. The sacred bull mount of the Hindu god Shiva is named _____.
- a) Minotaur
 - b) Bast
 - c) Europa
 - d) Nandi

D, p. 12

16. One of the activities that the Indo-Europeans did *not* engage in was _____.
- a) farming
 - b) waging war
 - c) hunting
 - d) riding horses

A, p. 13

17. Everywhere the Indo-Europeans conquered, they set up _____.
- a) a social system with four divisions
 - b) the subjugation of women

- c) tent cities
- d) principalities

A, p. 13

18. One of the social classes in India is the _____.

- a) Vaishyas
- b) Dyaus
- c) Catalhoyuk
- d) Vestal

A, p. 13

19. The priest class in India is called _____.

- a) Brahmins
- b) Shudras
- c) Bronislaw
- d) Druids

A, p. 13

20. In India the four-level social system was given mythic status in _____.

- a) the *Purusha*
- b) the *Rig Veda*
- c) *Olympia*
- d) *Mt. Meru*

A, p. 13

21. According to Laozi, the Dao that can be described is not the _____.

- a) god
- b) eternal Dao
- c) Name
- d) Earth mother

B, p. 16

22. According to Laozi, the name that can be named is _____.

- a) the Father
- b) the Mother
- c) not the eternal name
- d) the underlayer

C, p. 16

23. What the Daoists called Dao, the Upanishads called _____.

- a) Indra
- b) *sat*
- c) Maya
- d) None of the above.

B, p. 16

24. Svetaketu learned that _____ throughout the world.

- a) Apollo exists
- b) all is one
- c) there is a hidden essence
- d) all is *Purusha*

C, pp. 16-17

25. The Indian texts composed between 1500 and 600 BCE, whose title means "sitting-up-near," are collectively known as the _____.

- a) *Svetaketu*
- b) *Upanishads*
- c) *Daodejing*
- d) *Vedas*

B, p. 16

26. In the ancient Greek cosmology, two of the primary elements that make up the world are _____.

- a) air and water
- b) earth and rock
- c) fire and wood
- d) the sun and moon

A, p. 17

27. Jainism and Buddhism were rooted in _____.

- a) pre-brahminic traditions
- b) Vedic traditions
- c) Upanishadic traditions
- d) Biblical traditions

C, p. 17

28. Jaina master Mahavira was a strong proponent of _____.

- a) ahimsa
- b) war
- c) Vedic ritual
- d) animal sacrifice

A, p. 17

29. In the Ganges tradition, the notion of hereditary priesthood is _____.
a) embraced
b) rejected
c) developed
d) sacrosanct

B, p. 17

30. One way the avatar god is a savior is that he _____.
a) saves the faithful from hell
b) saves the underworld
c) saves the dying
d) saves social norms

A, p. 19

31. Krishna says to Arjuna that he comes into the world for _____.
a) the protection of the good
b) the defeat of karma
c) his followers
d) Hindus only

C, p. 19

32. Krishna says to Arjuna that he comes into the world for _____.
a) Shaktas
b) the setting up of righteousness
c) Shavites
d) non-Hindus

B, p. 19

33. The most famous Hindu source for stories of Krishna is the _____.
a) *Bhagavad Gita*
b) *Upanishads*
c) *Ramayana*
d) *Vedas*

A, p. 20

34. The avatar wave gave Buddhism the story of _____.
a) Amitabha
b) Avalokiteshvara

- c) Shakyamuni
- d) Rama

A, p. 21

35. One of the earliest sets of scriptures we have is the _____.

- a) *Vedas*
- b) *Upanishads*
- c) gospels
- d) sutras

A, p. 22

36. The teachings of the Buddha were transmitted orally _____ before they were written down.

- a) for millennia
- b) for decades
- c) for centuries
- d) for 100 years

C, p. 23

37. At the time of writing of the teachings of the Buddha, the Mahayana school _____ texts.

- a) added more
- b) purged some
- c) rewrote all of the
- d) edited

A, p. 23

38. Vajrayana schools of Buddhism have their own _____.

- a) canon
- b) surahs
- c) Avesta
- d) angels

A, p. 23

39. Buddhist practice did not include _____ until the 1200s.

- a) precepts
- b) placing faith in sacred texts
- c) meditation
- d) chanting

B, p. 23

40. Nichiren instructed his followers to place their faith in _____.

- a) the *Vairocana Sutra*
- b) the monks' vows
- c) Amitabha Buddha
- d) the *Lotus Sutra*

D, p. 23

41. Followers of the Pure Land school of Buddhism chant _____.

- a) the *pratimoksha*
- b) the *Book of the Dead*
- c) pujas
- d) homage to Amitabha Buddha

D, p. 23

42. The Hindu goddess of speech is _____.

- a) Logos
- b) Vac
- c) Indra
- d) Zohar

B, p. 23

43. According to your text, one of the reasons people make great art is _____.

- a) to serve religion
- b) because of neuroses
- c) to critique religion
- d) for profit

A, p. 24

44. According to your text, religion pervades the human world enough that _____.

- a) people are indirectly affected by it regardless of whether it plays a direct role in their lives
- b) its prevalence alone shows the nature of the divine
- c) it has become meaningless
- d) everyone is religious, whether they like it or not

A, p. 24

45. Issues regarding religious "insiders" versus "outsiders" are complex because there are _____.

- a) many kinds of insiders
- b) actually no such matters
- c) actually no outsiders

d) false prophets

A, p. 24

46. In the twenty-first century, all religions are _____.

- a) found throughout the world
- b) originally from the Far-East
- c) originally from the Middle East
- d) found only in Asia

A, p. 26

47. Common features of what we call "religion" include _____.

- a) sacred places
- b) spiritual beings
- c) life after death
- d) all of the above

D, p. 7

48. Your text defines "sacred" as that which is _____.

- a) "set aside"
- b) "associated with sacrifice"
- c) "associated with prayer"
- d) "blessed by God"

A, p. 7

49. _____ are commonly identified as sacred places.

- a) Valleys
- b) Oceans
- c) Mountains
- d) Forests

C, p. 7

50. Religion appears to be a universal response to _____.

- a) inevitable class struggle
- b) psychological yearnings to return to an infantile state of being nurtured
- c) God
- d) fundamental experiences of being human

D, p. 9

51. In many religions, aspects of animals' bodies, such as feathers and claws, are used _____.

- a) as amulets

- b) as a symbolic expression of regret for hunting
- c) as symbols of social status
- d) to demonstrate prowess in hunting

A, p. 7

52. Ancient people have commonly buried their dead in fetal postures facing east _____.
- a) to symbolize and perhaps facilitate rebirth
 - b) because the elderly and infirm were infantilized
 - c) to hasten decomposition
 - d) for space considerations

A, p. 8

53. When Canadian Scholar William Cantwell Smith spoke of "religion in the singular," he was referring to _____.
- a) primal religions
 - b) monotheistic religions
 - c) the universal phenomenon of human religiosity
 - d) Christianity

C, p. 9

54. According to your text, a shaman can be understood as _____.
- a) a magician who heals through the manipulation of perception
 - b) a Neolithic proto-astrologer
 - c) an ascetic who renounces attachment to the social world
 - d) a mediator between the world of the spirits and that of humans

D, p. 9

55. According to your text, shamanism _____.
- a) is usually a vocation or calling, following some extraordinary experience
 - b) is an exclusively male occupation
 - c) entails a life of strict celibacy
 - d) is a hereditary position passed down in lineages

A, p. 9

56. Ecstasy comes from the Greek word "ecstatic," which means _____.
- a) to "surrender" [to God]
 - b) to "experience" [hallucination]
 - c) to "stand outside" [oneself]
 - d) to "hear" [divine calling]

C, p. 9

57. Stonehenge was built during the _____.

- a) contemporary era
- b) Bronze Age
- c) Neolithic era
- d) Paleolithic era

C, p. 11

58. Early humans believed that the spirits of animals they hunted needed to be _____.

- a) watered
- b) monitored
- c) appeased
- d) fed

C, p. 10

59. A common element of both the bull gods of the Neolithic period and Persephone in Greek myth is that both are symbols of _____.

- a) human rage
- b) fertility
- c) weakness
- d) death

B, p. 12

60. The growth of temple religions accompanied the rise of _____.

- a) monotheism
- b) paganism
- c) a priestly class
- d) scripture

C, p. 12

61. The term "Indo-European" denotes _____.

- a) the earliest inhabitants of India
- b) an ethnic group
- c) a shared linguistic and cultural community
- d) a racial group

C, p. 13

62. According to your text, Zarathustra's writings were important in the development of _____.

- a) charity
- b) paganism
- c) monotheism

d) polytheism

C, p. 15

63. The Buddha taught his followers that the status of the "true brahmin" is _____.
a) impossible for humans to obtain
b) divinely granted
c) a birthright
d) earned through merit

D, p. 17

64. Mystery religions became so influential and popular during the Roman period that they posed a threat to _____.
a) the emperor
b) the official Roman religion and priesthood
c) the stability of the Roman Empire
d) the lives of government officials

B, p. 18

65. Avatar or avatar-like beings are found in _____.
a) Buddhism
b) Christianity
c) Hinduism
d) All of the above

D, p. 19

66. In contrast to Christianity, there is no room in Jewish thought for _____.
a) God
b) scripture
c) prophets
d) an avatar god

D, p. 21

67. The dominant approach to the contemporary study of religion is _____.
a) feminist
b) nonconfessional
c) functionalist
d) Marxist

B, p. 24

68. When approaching an unfamiliar religious tradition, outsiders need to be sensitive to _____.

- a) the opinions of other outsiders
- b) the divine truth
- c) the ways in which it serves the needs of its followers
- d) the way it ought to be

C, p. 24

69. The divisions of Buddhism are called:

- a) Vehicles
- b) Subdivisions
- c) Groups
- d) Sects

A, p. 4

70. The Harappan culture was named after:

- a) The archeological site in Punjab in modern Pakistan.
- b) The Indo Europeans
- c) An archeological site in India
- d) None of the above

A, p. 4

71. The Harappan culture is also known as:

- a) The Indus Valley civilization
- b) The Indo European civilization
- c) The civilization of Hinduism
- d) The Hindu civilization

A, p. 4

72. What do we know about the Indus Valley civilization

- a) Their planned cities
- b) Sewer system and Seals made of clay
- c) A and B
- d) Language and religious culture

C, p. 4

73. What is true about the Great Bath at Harappa?

- a) A place of purification like “temple tanks” that appeared in later Hinduism
- b) Similar to ancient South Indian temples where mating rituals were performed
- c) It could have been a brothel containing some religious annotation

d) All of the above

D, p. 4

74. In historic cultures, horned males are associated with:

- a) male deity
- b) shaman
- c) A and B
- d) none of the above

A, p. 6

75. Pipal tree is significant in Hinduism and in Buddhism it is known as the:

- a) Bodhi tree
- b) Mango tree
- c) Neem tree
- d) All of the above

A, p. 6

True or False Questions

1. In India, serpent spirits are called *nagas*. T, p. 7
2. The surahs of the Qur'an are believed to be the sacred words of God revealed to the prophet Muhammad by an angel. T, p. 23
3. One thing shamans do is appease animal spirits. T, p. 10
4. *Obon* is a religious food offering. F, p. 27
5. One way avatars are savior figures is that they are understood to have fought the forces of evil before the dawn of humanity. F, p. 19
6. One of the gods associated with the virility of the bull is Dionysus. F, p. 12

7. One of the four elements in the ancient Greek cosmology is earth. T, p. 17
8. The Tibetan Book of the Dead is one of the oldest scriptures in history. F, p. 22
9. Ancient cultures around the world favoured low-lying locations as burial sites. F, p. 11
10. Non-violence to all life represented a novel practice when it appeared within Ganges spirituality. T, p. 17
11. Islam asserts that its holy scripture was in God's "mind" before the creation of the world. T, p. 23
12. The gospels were not written until two or three generations after the death of Jesus. T, p. 22
13. A correlation seems to exist between the use of ritual and events perceived as dangerous. T, p. 10
14. Harappa is an archeological site in India. F, p. 4
15. Today we know almost everything about Harappa including its original name and its language and religious culture. F, p. 4
16. The Harappan culture is also known as the Indus Valley Civilization which was the largest civilization of its era. T, p. 4
17. Today, we know that the inhabitants of Harappa had extensive knowledge about town planning and sewer system. T, p. 4
18. The followers of Zarathustra migrated from Afghanistan to India and are called Parsees. F, p. 15
19. A prophet speaks the wisdom of the ages. F, p. 15
20. The founders of Asian religions were usually sages like Laozi and Buddha. T, p. 15
21. God was beyond human understanding was the idea preached by Shankara. T, p. 18
22. Faith-based approach promotes a specific interpretation of a religious idea. T, p. 25
23. Interfaith approach can be found in schools, in chaplaincy or in classes offered at religiously affiliated schools. F, p. 25
24. Interfaith approach deals with sharing of important characteristics of a religion through stories etc. between adherents of different faiths. T, p. 25
25. When a student encounters holy places and meets with religious leaders of a faith, she/he is

using experiential approach to study a religion. T, p. 25

Short Answer Questions

1. What are three basic characteristics of religion from ancient times? Use examples to illustrate your answer.

Three characteristics common to most religions are a belief in powerful gods, sacred places, and belief in some sort of life after death. These characteristics may manifest themselves differently in terms of the names given to the deity or the geographic location of a sacred place or the description of life after death, but they have more in common than not. Powerful gods, even in ancient times, occupied the highest strata of the universe and were concerned with creation. Certain "high places" have been considered as holy in many religious traditions. Often these high places become sacred places in terms of becoming burial grounds, which points to a concern with the afterlife.) (p. 7)

2. What did Bronislaw Malinowski learn about dangerous endeavours and ritual?

Malinowski studied the Trobriand Islanders. The hunters did not do rituals before fishing in the lagoon, but did rituals before fishing on the open ocean. This shows that religious behaviour is used, in part, to cope with danger. (p. 10)

3. What is one way that certain illnesses are dealt with in Sri Lanka?

In Sri Lanka, people with certain illnesses are advised to have a shaman offer a chicken to buy off the "graveyard demon." The shaman is then paid a second chicken for his services. (p. 11)

4. Ancient people preferred high places for burial sites. What did they do if there were no high places?

Artificial high places were built, but only for the elite of the society. The pyramids of Egypt and the Buddhist stupas in Asia are examples of these practices. The pyramids have a shaft pointed at important stars. Buddhist stupas have a centre pole to connect the earth with the heavens. (p. 11)

5. How does the concept of "sky father" unite the various Indo-European peoples?

The Indo-Europeans spread from India to Rome and central Europe. They worshiped the Sky Father; called in Greek, Zeus Pater; in Latin, Jupiter; and in Sanskrit, Dyaus Pitar. They sang hymns to female deities, such as the goddess of dawn, and had a hereditary priesthood. (p. 14)

6. What is the story of Amitabha Buddha about and what religious concept is it connected to?

Amitabha Buddha was a prince who wanted to be a Buddha and made 48 vows, some of which were focused on helping others. He vowed to establish a paradise where those who trust him will be reborn. This is a Buddhist example of an avatar. (p. 21)

7. What are three of the reasons people study religion?

The first reason is because it exists. A closely related reason is that religion plays a significant role in human affairs on a large scale, and is often connected to public displays of art, the act of war, and natural disasters. People also study religion for personal reasons. (p. 24)

8. How and when did temple religion develop?

This pattern began approximately 3,000 years ago and manifests itself in the building of large temples to accommodate sacrifice and sacred rituals that were conducted by a special group of people called priests. In India, the priests were known as brahmins. Other examples are Roman priests, Jewish temple priests who were hereditary and druids. (pp. 12-13)

9. What is the Energy God?

This pattern began to emerge 2,500 years ago. In it, the deity is understood as an energy behind the cosmos, one that does not necessarily issue commandments or answer prayers or interact with humans, nor does it direct the course of history. Rather this deity simply exists. The Chinese concept of the Dao is a prime example of such a religion. (pp. 15-16)

10. Where do "insiders" get their religious knowledge?

"Insiders" learn religion from their parents, teachers at religious schools, and/or members of their religious communities. (p. 24)

11. What are some of the problems with dividing religions into Eastern and Western religions?

The biggest problem is that although Western religions developed in the Middle East, there is now no clear dividing line between Eastern and Western religions. Every religion is now found all over the world. (p. 26)

12. What is meant by a mystery religion?

A mystery religion involves esoteric cultic or religious practices that were very popular in the Roman period. These traditions were open only to those who underwent an initiation, hence the name "mystery." Death and rebirth were central themes of the religions. By ritually identifying with a god who died and was reborn, one too could gain immortality. The cult of Dionysus is one example. Christianity (which the dying and reborn God) may have been influenced by these traditions. (p. 18)

13. According to your text, in what way does the poet Ogden Nash's statement "Whatever the

mind comes at, God is not that" resemble core ideas of the Energy God?

It suggests that God is beyond human conceptualizations. We cannot "know" God intellectually; we can only know God experientially. This was the central message of such teachings as Chinese Daoism and Hindu Upanishadic wisdom. (p. 16)

14. Briefly describe the Harappan Culture. What are some of the things found at Harappa that are similar to later Hinduism?

The Harappan Culture, also known as the Indus Valley Civilization, is named after the archeological site Harappa in the Punjab region of modern Pakistan and was extended to most of Eastern India. It used to have a well-established sewer system and remarkably planned towns. Its religious culture and language is still not deciphered however, archeologists have gotten clues like the Great Bath, a place of purification; a mating ritual temple or a brothel, and seals containing depictions of shamans performing rituals and offering sacrifices which show that it had a religious structure as well as a concept of deities. Tree spirits were often revered as they were in Hinduism long after Harappa people. Pipal tree or Bodhi tree was considered sacred by the inhabitants of Harappa just like in later Hinduism and Buddhism. They also venerated deities that had animal, plant and human like features as well as several seals showed connection of celestial bodies and deities which can be found in later Hinduism as well (pp. 4-6)

15. What is the difference between sages and prophets? What popular religions had sages?

Sages are great moral leaders. A sage is a wise person who has extensive knowledge of the past and has ancient wisdom. A sage guides people to live a life of peaceful co-existence however, this idea is not forced upon anyone by claiming it's the verbatim word of god so one should take it as it is, rather its authority lies in the sense of the message. Prophets on the other hand brings gods message to people. The prophets preach the word of god and usually the target is to convert others to the path they consider is the only truth. Middle Eastern religions usually have prophets, this includes Abrahamic religions whereas Asian religions typically have sages for example, Buddha, Mahavira and Laozi who founded Buddhism, Jainism and Daoism, respectively. (p. 15)

16. Describe the academic study of religion.

"Religious studies" or "study of religion" is the approach that is recommended by American Academy of Religion, the largest scholarly organization in the world. It is basically the study and examination of a religion with an academic perspective. There are various methods to do that. One can start an anthropological study of religion that deals with the adherents of a religion. It is concerned with what they believe in and what their behaviors are. However, there are other academic methods to study a religion as well. These include sociological, textual and historical methods. (p. 25)

17. What are the five overarching assertions about religions according to scholars?

Religious studies scholars have overall five claims about religions. Those include religions being internally diverse, always adapting and changing accordingly as well as the assertion that there is a difference between how a religious idea is practiced and how that idea is studied, that a religion is basically present in everything a human does and finally religions usually have roots in history. (p. 25)

18. What are some of the methods to study religion?

Some methods other than the academic method to study the religion includes faith-based, interfaith and experiential methods. The faith-based method propagates a certain religious idea and interpretation. It is usually found in schools where religious studies are offered. An interfaith method means sharing important characteristics of a religion with adherents of the same faith or of different religions through story or any other form of communication. An experiential approach focuses on the one-on-one experience a person gets by meeting the religious leaders of a faith, by going to the sacred places and by meeting adherents of that faith. This approach can be problematic because every individual and religious setting has its own perspective and interpretation of a faith which therefore affects one's effort to understand the faith with an academic perspective as the experiential approach already creates a certain idea of the faith in one's mind. (p. 25)

19. What is the difference between academic study of religion and theology?

The academic study of religion studies people, their beliefs, behaviors and institutions. This falls under anthropology however, religion is not limited to just one category. On the other hand, studying the truth about these beliefs and institutions and finding out what the deity or deities of a religion wanted and commanded for its adherents is called theology. It is concerned with studying the nature of the divine. Historically, theology concerned with studying Christianity, however, now it can be used to studying any religion or a religion's own self-study. (pp. 25-26)

Essay Questions

1. What is the Hindu story of Princess Dhamayanti about?

- * The princess's father holds a party, to which he invites marriageable princes.
- * Four gods come disguised as Prince Nala.
- * The princess is able to distinguish the real Nala, her preference.
- * She is able to do this because the gods do not sweat and float above the ground.
- * She marries Nala and they live happily ever after. (pp. 18-19)

2. What is the *Bhagavad Gita* and what teachings does it impart?

- * The *Bhagavad Gita* is a section of the *Mahabharata*.
- * It teaches about morality, duty, and the soul.
- * There are different paths that lead to the good religious life.

- * One is *karma yoga*, the way of good works.
- * The second is *jnana yoga*, the way of deep spiritual wisdom.
- * The third is *bhakti yoga*, the way of faithful devotion to Krishna.
- * Real salvation comes from *bhakti yoga*. (pp. 20-21)

3. What are the nine waves of religion? Briefly explain each.

- (1) Shamanism: A wave that was characterized by its ritual specialists.
- (2) Connecting to the Cosmos: A wave in which devotees worked to create a connection to the sacred by studying astrology, building religious structures and hilltop tombs, and contacting animal spirits and/or a Bull God.
- (3) Temple Religion: A wave that shaped many later traditions and that was characterized by large temples, elaborate sacrifices, and prestigious priests.
- (4) Prophetic Religion: A wave that included people who spoke for deities and people who foresaw the future.
- (5) The Energy God: A wave in which the divine was understood as an energy that simply exists, underlying all things.
- (6) Purity and Monasticism: A development that focused on enlightenment through asceticism and non-violence, the goal being to perfect the human potential for purity of mind.
- (7) Mystery Religion: A wave of Greek and Roman traditions in which core teachings and rituals were only revealed to initiates.
- (8) God on Earth: A wave characterized by an emphasis on avatars -- namely, gods who were truly human and who came to earth to save people.
- (9) Scriptural Religion: A wave of traditions characterized by particular scriptures that were considered to be the literal words of God, to which all people must adhere. (p. 9-23)

4. What are the various patterns that can be observed in most religions? Briefly explain each.

- * One early pattern to emerge was the development of a religious specialist in what was called the Shaman, who, among other things, could subdue and appease the various entities of the spirit world by entering into a trance and communicating with that world.
- * A second pattern was the development of a pattern that sought to connect to the gods through the construction of sacred places using natural elements.
- * A third pattern was the development of temple religion that saw the gradual building of huge structures to accommodate the need for ritual, which was administered by religious specialists such as priests.
- * A fourth pattern was the development of the energy God. (pp. 9-17)

5. What is scriptural religion?

Scripturalism has been at the root of Islam and much of Protestant Christianity. In Judaism, the role of scripture began to take prominence during the Babylonian exile, when the priestly function was no longer used and people came to rely on the teachings of the sages, the rabbis instead of the rituals of the priests. By the third century, the scriptures of the Christian canon were formed and it became as central to Christianity as the Torah was to Judaism. This scriptural reliance came to its peak in the religion of Islam, which understands the surahs of

the Qur'an to be the sacred words of God revealed to the prophet Muhammad by an angel. In the 1200s, certain Buddhists came to give special status to the *Lotus Sutra*.

* Some religions have maintained that their scriptures existed before creation. So in Judaism, the *Zohar* speaks of the Torah as playing a role in creation, as does the prologue of the Gospel of John in Christianity, and Islam's understanding that the Qur'an existed in the mind of God before the world was created. In the religions of Egypt and India, it was thought that the gods would not have created the world themselves but rather have had others do this for them and so the divine word came to have special meaning. It is the case that in some scriptural religions the scriptural writings take on such an authority that they are known as fundamentalist religions. (pp. 22-23)

6. Why is the emergence of avatars (incarnation) associated with a shift away from sacrificial rituals to that of faith?

In avatar religions, the ritual of sacrifice is replaced by the ritual of placing faith in the savior god. Not only does the avatar save the world from some evil power, such as Satan or a demonic king, but the avatar also saves people from hell those who put their faith in him and secures them a place in heaven. (p. 19)

7. How does the concept of *avatar* appear in three different religions?

The avatar concept took root in Asia and the Middle East at least 2,000 years ago. Among Hindus its impact was reflected in the worship of Krishna; among Buddhists in the veneration of Amitabha Buddha (the figure who would become Amida in Japan); and among Jews in the rise of Christianity. (p. 19)

8. Why do we study religion?

* Most fundamentally, because religion exists. It is a vital component of all known human societies.

* To understand human culture, history, and society, we need to understand its religious dimensions.

* To understand what it means to be human, we need to explore religion.

* We may wish to learn more about our fellow citizens and the traditions they practise.

* We may have personal interests in learning about our own traditions, or those of our parents. (p. 24)

9. Describe some academic and non-academic methods to study religion.

* Academic study of religion approach provides one with tools to examine a religion with an academic perspective.

* Religious studies deals with the people, their beliefs and behaviors while theology refers to what is the truth behind those beliefs and behaviors. The latter deals with finding out what the divine wants from its followers.

* Overall, five claims regarding religion according to religion studies scholars i.e. difference in studying a religious idea and the practice of a religious idea; internal diversity; always

changing; roots in history; present in everything a human does

- * Faith-based method refers to promoting a specific interpretation of religion. It falls under non-academic study of religion because studying religion academically requires to analyze religion with an unbiased and neutral approach and not focus on just one interpretation.

- * Interfaith method of studying a religion deals with sharing important aspects of a religion through story or other forms of mutual sharing. This can also fall under non-academic study of religion because this deals with sharing of one's own take and experience with a religion or by having conversations with others.

- * Experiential method is concerned with encountering the religious leaders, adherents and visiting holy places of that religion. Students get face-to-face with the religious traditions by experiencing that religion's sacred places and by observing the practitioners. This could fall under academic study of religion when experiential encounters occur within the context of ethnographic research. If this context is removed it becomes non-academic as every individual adherent or religious place has its own interpretation (p. 25)

10. Where did the Harappan Culture flourish? What are some of the things found at Harappa that indicate that this culture was the predecessor of later Indian religions like Hinduism and Buddhism?

- * Harappa is an archeological site in Punjab and is named after a nearby town which also gave the Harappan Culture its name.

- * Also known as the Indus Valley Civilization flourished in Pakistan and Eastern India

- * It had remarkable and well-established town planning and sewer system.

- * Seals found from the site depict religious rituals being performed

- * The Great Bath is indicative of religious structure similar to later Hinduism's temple tanks or place where mating rituals were performed. Also, it is speculated it could have been a brothel with a religious meaning.

- * Trees like Pipal tree or Bodhi tree are shown with great spiritual importance in the seals.

- * Tree spirits are revered. Animal, plant and human-like creatures which are considered priests or shamans are shown performing sacrificial rituals.

- * Seven mysterious figures are deemed as seven stars of an asterism or sisters of Pleiades Constellation hinting the later Hindu tradition of associating deities with heavenly objects. (pp. 4-6)

