

2. Major Philosophies of The World

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Question

When was Mahavir Swami born?

- A. 699 B. C.
- B. 570 B. C.
- C. 675 B. C.
- D. 599 B. C.

Answer

Option D is correct because Mahavir Swami was born in 599 B.C in Kundagram, Vaishali

2. Question

Where did Mahatma Buddha deliver his first sermon?

- A. Kapilvastu
- B. Sarnath
- C. Gaya
- D. Bodhgaya

Answer

Option D is correct because Mahatama Buddha gave his first sermon to two nomads at Bodhgaya.

3. Question

When did Hizri Samvat start?

- A. 622 B. C.
- B. 632 B. C
- C. 570 B. C.
- D. 566 B. C.

Answer

Option A is correct because 622 B.C was the year when Hazrat Mohammad Sahib left Mecca to go to Medina.

4. Question

Which is the holy book of the Christians?

- A. Gita
- B. Quran
- C. Avesta-e -Zind
- D. Bible

Answer

Option A is incorrect because Gita is the holy book of the Hindus

Option B is incorrect because the Quran is the holy book of Muslims

Option C is incorrect because Avesta-e-Zind is the holy book of the Persian religion

Option D is correct because the Bible is the holy book of the Christians

Very Short Answer

1. Question

How many Purusharthas are there? Name them.

Answer

The Vedic Religion, there was great emphasis on following lifestyle patterns that would lead to ultimate development both spiritually and physically. This was given prominence through the system of four distinct Purusharthas. They are as follows: a. Dharma: referring to the fulfilment of duties and practising good conduct b. Artha: referring to money, which brings material wealth in life c. Kama: referring to physical pleasures d. Moksha: referring to the practice of liberation, that is seen as the ultimate aim of life

2. Question

In which religion, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has been said?

Answer

‘Vasudhavia Kutumbakam’ is a Vedic philosophy that preaches the broader perspective that a person should see the whole world as his own family so as to enhance his Karma.

3. Question

According to Vedic philosophy, who is the creator, supporter and destroyer of the world?

Answer

In Vedic philosophy, the creator, supporter and destroyer of the world are seen as One God or Eternal Truth, that is given different names by man like Agni, Yama and Matarisvan.

4. Question

Name the first and twenty-fourth Tirthankaras of Jain religion.

Answer

The first Tirthankara of Jainism was Rishaba Dev, also called as Adinath. Mahavira was the twenty-fourth Tirthankara.

5. Question

Which are the five Mahavrats?

Answer

Mahavrats are seen as the means of attaining salvation in Jainism. They are the following five. a. Ahimsa, b. Satya, c. Asteya, d. Aparigraha and e. Brahmacharya

6. Question

How has Ahimsa been explained in Jain religion?

Answer

Jainism places great emphasis on the practice of Ahimsa. It focuses upon the feeling of kindness, benevolence and equality towards all, not just humans. It is practised through free and pious speech, thought and action.

7. Question

What was the childhood name of Mahatma Buddha?

Answer

Mahatma Buddha was named as Siddhartha, but was also known as Gautama as he belonged to the Gautam Gotra.

8. Question

What was the reason for sorrow as described by Mahatma Buddha?

Answer

Mahatma Buddha, when he attained Mahabhiniskraman, revealed the truth that the reason for all sorrow was desire or passion for worldly things.

9. Question

Into how many sects were Buddhism divided?

Answer

Buddhism is divided into two major sects: Mahayana and Hinayana

10. Question

By which name is the incident of Mohammad Sahib's departure is the incident of the divide?

Answer

Mohammad Sahib's departure from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. is seen as a marker of divide called 'Hizrat' in Islam.

11. Question

Where was Hazrat Mohammad born?

Answer

Hazrat Mohammad was born in Mecca in 570 A.D.

12. Question

Who was the prominent disciple of Jesus Christ?

Answer

Saint Peter and Saint Paul were prominent disciples of Jesus Christ, who aided in preaching Jesus Christ's religious principles.

13. Question

What are the people called who follow the ancient principles of the Bible?

Answer

There are two main sects in Christianity. The people who follow the ancient principles, which are seen as the original religion, are called the Catholics. They follow the ancient Bible and its principles.

14. Question

Who was the founder of the Persian religion?

Answer

The Persian religion was founded by Zoraster, who is said to have attained knowledge on the Sablan Hill at the age of 30 and later propagated the religion throughout Persia.

15. Question

Who is considered as the embodiment of godly power in Persian religion?

Answer

The Persian religion believed in two kinds of powers in the world- godly and wicked. The embodiment of Godly power is seen as Ahur Mazda. He is attributed to have had created the earth, heaven and mankind.

Short Answer

1. Question

Explain the message of toleration in Vedic philosophy.

Answer

The Vedic philosophy seeks to maintain the principle of unity among all men. The principle indicates that the soul of all-pervasive Brahma in the world and man's soul are one and the same. This emphasises on the ultimate objective of feeling Sachidananda, or Permanent bliss and happiness due to the realisation of this Ekatma. Vedic philosophy thus encourages the promotion of a message of tolerance, to all of mankind.

2. Question

Describe the concept of Triratnas in Jain philosophy.

Answer

Mahavira established the basis of Jain philosophy that focused upon attainment of salvation through giving up on the worldly illusions. He established three means of attaining the final goal of salvation. (i) Right Knowledge: The awareness of true and complete knowledge that comes from learning and following the teachings of the Tirthankaras.

(ii) Right Belief: The undivided and complete belief and faith in the teachings and guidance of the Tirthankaras to attain true salvation.

(iii) Right Character: The focus on maintaining a pious, clean and controlled sense of self which is integral to practise Jainism.

3. Question

Which are the prominent Tirthankaras of Jain religion?

Answer

Jainism had 24 Tirthankaras or spiritual teachers. The first Tirthankara was Rishabha Dev, also known as Adinath. Another important Tirthankara is Parsvanath, who was 23rd. Mahavira is the most prominent, as is associated with establishing Jainism and was the 24th Tirthankara.

4. Question

Describe the concept of four noble truths in Buddha philosophy.

Answer

Mahatma Buddha sought to preach a means through which people who were suffering from the world's miseries and sorrows attained peace and thus, freedom from their grief. He laid down four principles, called the Four Noble Truths, that elucidated the same. (i) Existence of Sorrows: Truth of living is that the world is filled with misery and anguish. People suffer greatly due to the sorrows of birth, death, profit and loss, union and disunion. This is an unavoidable truth that exists in the lives of all people.

(ii) Reason for Sorrow: It is due to human's constant desires and passions that we experience this sorrow. (iii) Resolution of Sorrow: We can overcome our sorrows by ending our wants and needs.

(iv) Path to end Sorrow: Mahatma Buddha mentions an eightfold plan that can guide all men to free themselves from the ceaseless cycle of desire and sorrow.

5. Question

Explain the views of Mahatma Buddha regarding the existence of the soul.

Answer

Mahatma Buddha had a very different and ambiguous view on the existence of the soul and its importance. He did not believe that the soul of man was immortal. He maintained a wary approach to the existence of the soul, he neither denied its existence or accepted it. He only focused upon the people and their path to attain freedom from sorrow.

6. Question

What was the effect of the teachings of Mohammad Sahib on the people of Arab?

Answer

When Hazrat Mohammed Sahib first attained godly knowledge in a cave and proclaimed that 'No one else should be worshipped except Allah' and called himself his prophet, he was greatly opposed and forced to relocate to Medina. However, the people of Medina welcomed him greatly and called themselves as Ansaar. Mohammed Sahib gradually began preaching and they accepted his thoughts. It was later promoted throughout Medina which led to a spread of his thoughts to the whole of the Arab world. It was however later, post his death, that his Khalifas (or followers) set up a great foundation and promulgated the principles far and wide.

7. Question

Describe the godly and evil power according to Persian philosophy.

Answer

The Persian Philosophy maintains that there are two kinds of powers in the world- Godly and Wicked.

Godly powers or deity is the great good power. It is seen as the most powerful force that has created the world, its mankind and heaven. It urges men not to think bad, not to commit sin or give up the good path. It is embodied in Ahur Mazda.

Wicked power or Ahirman is seen to be the embodiment of evil and destruction. Its power is seen to lead men to commit sins and convert them into devils, thus leading them to Hell.

These powers are in constant conflict, but the Ahur Mazda always claims victory, indicating the victory of good over evil.

Essay Type

1. Question

Describe the main characteristics of Vedic philosophy.

Answer

Vedic philosophy is one of the most important among all ancient Indian philosophies that derives its teachings from the Vedic literature.

It lays emphasis on the following major philosophies:

(i) Religious notion of Vedic philosophy: It puts great reverence to natural forces like Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Yama. We find many hymns and ceremonies dedicated to them. They viewed a unitary God as the creator, preserver and destroyer, only called by different names by man. Although, the presence of multi-gods and goddesses are described in the Vedas, who are representations of either natural forces or feelings like Shraddha, Krodha etc. Ritualistic ceremonies like yajna were conducted and idol worship was not practised.

(ii) Atman (Soul): The Vedic philosophy is deeply rooted in the principle of unity among all men. It indicates that the soul of all-pervasive Brahma in the world and man's soul are one and the same. This emphasises on the ultimate objective of feeling Sachidananda, or Permanent bliss and happiness due to the realisation of this Ekatma. Vedic philosophy thus encourages the promotion of a message of tolerance, to all of mankind.

(iii) Four Purusharthas: The Vedic Religion mentions following certain basic principles that would lead to ultimate development both spiritually and physically. This was underlined through four distinct Purusharthas. They are as follows: a. Dharma: referring to the fulfilment of duties and practising good conduct. b. Artha: referring to money, which brings material wealth in life. c. Kama: referring to physical pleasures. d. Moksha: referring to the practice of liberation, that is seen as the ultimate aim of life.

(iv) Rebirth: Rebirth of the soul is taken depending upon man's karma (deeds), which can make his life fulfilled. The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is also illustrated where a man can free himself from the chains of narrowness by considering the whole world as his family.

(v) To spend money wisely: Upanishads mention that man should not spend lavishly as it hinders him from performing his duties by being a cause of greed and illusion.

These principles thus illustrate how Vedic religion inspires integrity, good conduct and co-operation amongst men.

2. Question

Which are the main teachings of Jain philosophy?

Answer

The word Jain is derived from the word 'Jin' that means victory- in essence referring to the spiritual win of man over worldly illusion and senses to provide salvation. Jainism illustrates the following teachings:

(i) Triratnas: These refer to the three measures of salvation mentioned by Mahavira to ensure salvation. These are: Right Knowledge: awareness of true and complete knowledge from learning and following the teachings of the Tirthankaras.

b. Right Belief: The complete belief and faith in the teachings and guidance of the Tirthankaras to attain true salvation.

c. Right Character: maintaining a pious, clean and controlled sense of self integral to practise Jainism.

(ii) Five Mahavratas:

The five main principles are given by Mahavira which aid in the attainment of salvation. These are: Ahimsa: the feeling of kindness, benevolence and equality towards mankind and not thinking or feeling any harm towards others.

b. Satya (truth): Speaking the truth and ahimsa go hand in hand, which is also emphasised on the truthfulness in expression.

c. Asteya: refers to not committing theft, which is seen as an immoral sin.

d. Aparigraha: refers to not possessing worldly belongings, which can cause men to be stuck to the world's illusion, and to possess only as much as is essential.

e. Brahmacharya: refers to remaining celibate to keep self from the vices of the world.

(iii) Reason for happiness and sorrows:

All reason for sorrow is man himself. To keep self away from the world's sorrows, he should engage in the afore-mentioned practices that will aid in conquering over the world's illusion.

(iv) Penance and Worship:

To gain control over the soul of man, Mahavira emphasised upon penance and meditation to overcome the world's illusion. There are two kinds of penance-internal and external. Internal comes from practising politeness, service and self-study, attained through means of external penance (majorly through fasting).

(v) Immortality of the Soul:

Mahavira believed in the immortality of the soul that came from the cycle of rebirth based upon the karmic deeds of a person. The soul is immortal and imperishable and can be freed from the constant cycle of rebirth through distancing self from worldly illusion.

(vi) Renunciation:

Jainism is based heavily on the principle of renunciation of worldly possessions and through strict penance to attain salvation.

(vii) Siavad:

The principle of looking at events with multiple perspectives or many sightedness aids in the coordination of thoughts and ensures the welfare of others. This prevents conflicts and tensions among people.

Thus, Jainism is based upon the afore-mentioned strict principles that seek to aid man in attaining salvation and breaking away from the chains of rebirth.

3. Question

Describe the teachings of Buddha philosophy.

Answer

Buddhism is based upon the principles of Buddha who attained enlightenment and spread the message of peaceful worship.

His teachings are understood through his recorded preaching that aid in the attainment of permanent peace.

(i) Four Noble Truths:

The basis of philosophical teachings, focusing upon the existence of sorrow, the reason and path of ending all sorrows. He maintained that sorrows in life are caused due to the desire of man, which can be resolved through the eight-fold path, which can eliminate the cause of worldly pleasure and cycle of pain. These were: right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

(ii) Emphasis on values and ethics:

Buddha placed great emphasis on maintaining values and ethics which lead to purity of speech, mind and action. He advised 10 morals or code of conduct. Following Ahimsa, not commit theft, not speak falsely, keeping away from dance and music, keeping away from pleasure, not take food at incorrect times, renouncing soft beds and wealth.

(iii) Emphasis on Arguments:

Buddha was a rational man who believed that opposing conservative ideas and rituals by independent arguments and not following blind faith.

(iv) No faith in the Existence of God:

He did not believe in the existence of God or the creation theory of God. He was thus considered an atheist by some.

(v) No belief in the immortality of the soul:

He did not believe in the immortality of the soul and did not comment if he thought a soul existed or not. His views remained ambiguous.

(vi) Faith in the law of Karma:

He placed heavy emphasis on the law of Karma that man reaps the result of his actions and deeds. He believed that there is a rebirth of the ego to pay for the karmic deeds of the person. When the desires and passions of a person come to an end, the ego is destroyed and attains Nirvana.

(vii) Importance of Ahimsa:

Buddha spoke of harming others is a great sin and placed emphasis on the purity of conscience.

(vii) Attaining Nirvana:

Buddha believed that the main objective of Buddhism was to aid man to attain Nirvana or salvation through extinguishing the need for illusions and thoughts of passion.

4. Question

Throwing light upon the life of Mohammad Sahib describe the teachings of Islam.

Answer

Islam was founded by Hazrat Muhammad who was born in 570 AD in Mecca. His father's name was Abdulla, who died before his birth and mother's name was Amina, and she died in his early childhood. He was thus raised by his nurse Halima Dai. Muhammad Sahib married Khadija, who was a 40-year widow, at the age of 20. However, post marriage indulged himself in meditation.

Arabians lay faith in multiple gods and idol worshipping. However, when Muhammad Sahib attained divine knowledge of Islam, which proclaimed "No one except Allah should be worshipped and I am his messenger", he faced a lot of backlashes and was tortured to leave Mecca and go to Medina. This important event is called Hizrat in Islam. This event is marked as the Hizri Samwat in Islam, from 622 A.D.

The people in Medina who welcomed Mohammad Saheb were called Ansars (helpers). He thus started propagating Islam and gained the following of people. In 632 A.D. after his death, his Khalifas founded the vast empire of Islam among which Abubakar, Siddiqui, Hazrat Umar Farooq, Hazrat Usman Gani, Hazrat Ali were the most important. Islam thus gradually spread in the whole Arab

The teachings of Islam are preserved in the Quran, the holy book of Islam.

A. There are five main teachings of Islam.(i) Kalma (Mool Mantra): People should worship only Allah and Muhammad is his messenger (paigambar). This indicates the unity of God.

(ii) Namaz: Every Muslim should offer namaaz at five fixed times a day.

(iii) Roja (Vrat): Every Muslim should keep fast from sunrise to sunset in the month of Ramzan

(iv) Zakat (Charity): Every Muslim should give an amount of not less than the 40th part of his income in charity.

(v) Haj Pilgrimage: Every Muslim should go on pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina (called Haj) once in his life.

B. They believe that after the death of man, Allah calculates his deeds and give him heaven or hell.

C. Islam did not believe in idol worshipping.

D. Islam does not believe in the cycle of birth and rebirth, unlike other religious traditions.

5. Question

Giving an introduction of Jesus Christ, throw light on the Christian religion's philosophy

Answer

Christianity was founded by Jesus Christ, who was born in Palestine at Bethlehem. His father Yusuf and mother Mariam were carpenters. However, he was determined to make the society free from superstitious beliefs. He preached that God looks down on everyone with the same eyes and that everyone is equal before God. His views were vehemently opposed by the Jews as he was against the violent acts of Jews in Jerusalem. He was arrested through betrayal by one of his own disciples called Judas. He was ordained

punishment by crucifixion at the age of 30. He, however, proclaimed, "O God forgive them because they do not know what they are doing."

His principles were then propagated by his two main disciples Saint Paul and Saint Peter.

The Philosophy of Christianity is understood by teachings of Jesus which are compiled in the holy book called the Bible, revered by the Christians

The principles and teachings of Christianity are as follows:

- (i) God is one and all are equal before his eyes
- (ii) Hate the crime and but not the criminal
- (iii) All human beings are the children of one God. So we all are related to each other.
- (iv) Emphasis on the good conduct of humanity
- (v) We should leave anger and feeling of revenge and learn to forgive
- (vi) He emphasised on tolerance which would help in the development of the soul.
- (vii) He emphasised the message of truth, non-violence, service to poor and sufferers, sacrifice

However, in the later years, Christianity was divided into two main sects called Catholics and Protestants.

The Catholics followed the ancient and original message of Christianity. It modified itself after the Counter-Reformation movement.

The Protestants followed upon removing the orthodox political rights of the Pope, the sale of indulgences and emphasis on reform of the religion.