

Religion CRQ 1: The Geography of Religions (25 points)(KEY)

Geographers are less interested in the belief systems of religions than they are in the following four characteristics of religions:

1. Point/Date of origin and founder (if any) (Where and how it began.)
2. Path and method of diffusion (Where and how it spread.)
3. Current distribution (Where it is now.)
4. Landscape expression (Physical expression of the religion on the landscape.)

Choose TWO of the world religions listed below.

Christianity Islam Hinduism Buddhism Sikhism Judaism/Other (your choice)

For EACH of the two religions chosen:

- A. On the map, label the core for that religion with the first letter of that religion.. (there is a separate map for each religion). (1/2 point)
- B. On the map, *clearly* indicate the primary routes of diffusion (including any branches) of the religion. (2 points)
- C. On the map, shade the approximate current distribution for that religion. (2 points)
- D. Then discuss all four aspects of the bulleted points above for that religion. (4 X 2 points=8 points)

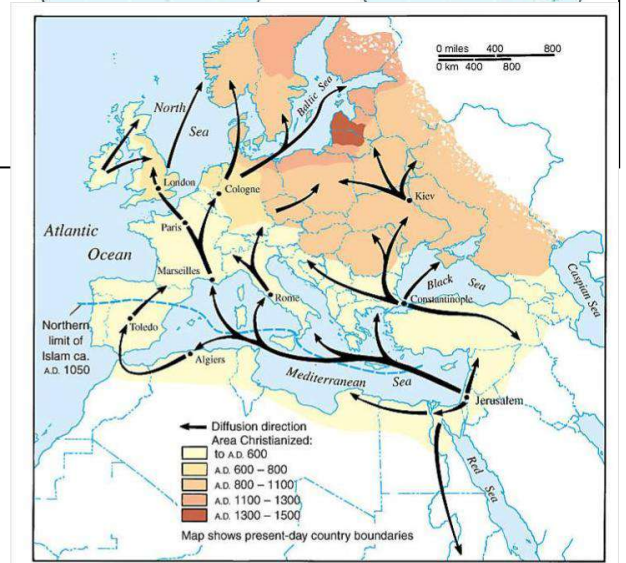
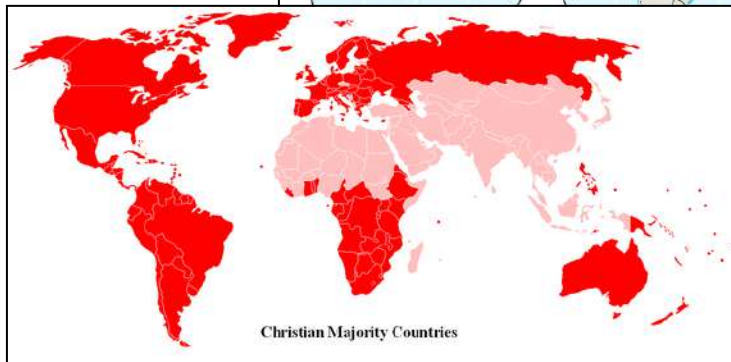
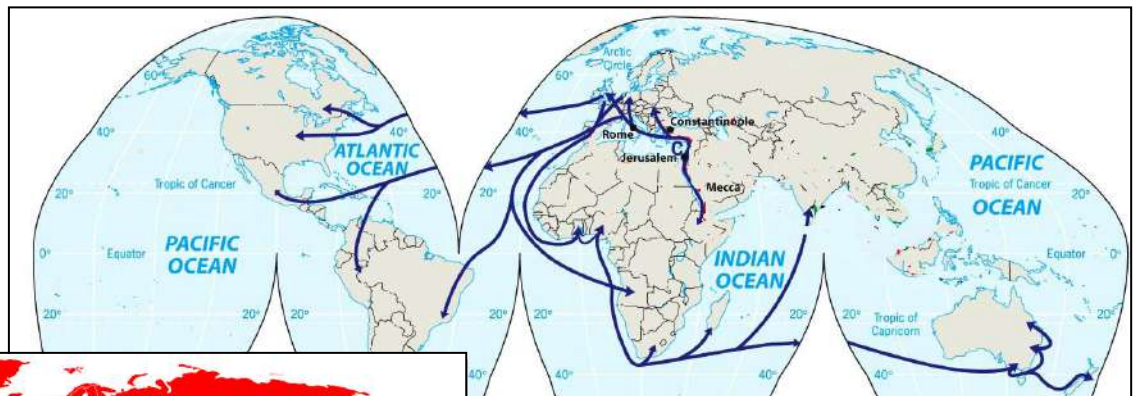
Total: 12 1/2 points X 2 religions = 25 points

Please note: You are required to provide an adequate written discussion of the characteristics in the first three bullet points even though they will also be depicted on the maps.)

1. Christianity

A & B. (right and below right):
hearth (marked with "C") and diffusion

C. Below: Current distribution



D. 1. Point of Origin/Founder (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Founded on the life and teachings of Jesus, born around 8 BCE.
- Hearth was SW Asia/Eastern Mediterranean (modern day Palestine/Israel.)
- Split from its "parent" religion Judaism
- Beliefs: Monotheistic religion; follow teachings of Jesus to achieve eternal life; sacred texts: Bible, both Old and New Testaments

D.2. Path and method of diffusion (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Spread first by relocation diffusion in the form of missionary activity along the protected sea routes and excellent road network of the Roman Empire. First great Christian missionary was Paul of Tarsus.
- Later spread rapidly by contagious diffusion (person to person contact) within the Roman Empire, especially after Christianity was proclaimed the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century by emperor Theodosius.
- Spread hierarchically in Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages through the conversion of kings / elites.
- European colonization after 1500 spread Christianity worldwide. This included relocation diffusion in the form of the resettlement of European Christians in the New World (North and South America), Africa, and Asia and contagious diffusion in the form of aggressive proselytizing by Christian missionaries in these areas.
- Christianity split into two branches, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, after 1054, and split further into a third branch, Protestantism, after the Reformation in the 16th c. There are now over 33,000 denominations worldwide.
- The spread of Christianity has been aided by its dominance in industrialized and militarily powerful core countries in Europe and North America.

D.3 Current Distribution (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Christianity has more adherents and is more widely dispersed than any other religion. There are over 2 billion Christians, representing almost one third of the world's population, widely distributed throughout the world.
- Christianity is the dominant religion in North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. Due to successful missionary activities, there are also many countries in both Africa (Rwanda, DR Congo, Zambia) and Asia (East Timor, Philippines) with over 90% Christian majorities.
- Catholics are dominant in Latin America, in Eastern and Southwestern Europe, in French Canada, and in the Northeastern and Western parts of the U.S.
- Protestants are dominant in northwest Europe and southern US (mostly Baptists).
- Eastern Orthodox are dominant in Eastern and Southeast Europe (Balkans) and in Russia.
- There are many other small branches of Christianity which together make up 14% of Christians worldwide. These include the Maronites in Lebanon, the Ethiopian Church in Ethiopia, the Coptic Church in Egypt, and the Mormons in the Western U.S.

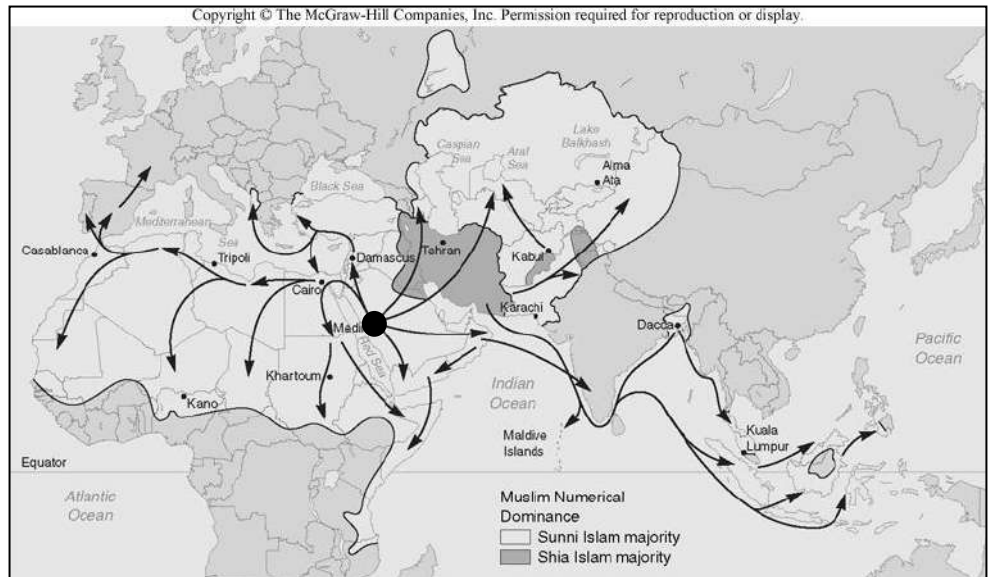
D.4 Landscape Expression (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Churches are the dominant landscape expression of Christianity. Churches play a critical role in the landscape expression of Christianity because they are commonly considered holy ground, because they are built to express religious principals, and because community worship is extremely important for most Christians. Churches are often the tallest building in a community. No single style of church dominates; rather churches reflect the values of specific denomination and the architectural style of the region.
- Christians bury their dead. Cemeteries are commonly located either beside churches or on the outskirts of towns.
- As a universalizing religion, Christian holy places are associated with key events in the life of it's founder. For Christians this means Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, and Jerusalem, where Christ is thought to have died and been resurrected, are holy sites.
- Utopian communities built in the 18th and 19th centuries in the United States were laid out so as to integrate Christian values in the everyday life of the inhabitants. Salt Lake City is an example of a utopian community designed based on the principals of a Christian religion.
- Christian toponyms or place names, such as those found in Quebec, are a common form of landscape expression in Christian dominated areas.

2. Islam

D. 1. Point of Origin/Founder (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Islam originated in SW Asia/ Eastern Mediterranean (Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia) around AD 600.
- Founded by Mohammed, who Muslims believe received a revelation (the Koran) from God.
- Along with Christianity and Judaism, is an "Abrahamic religion" (all three consider themselves descendants of the patriarch Abraham.)
- Beliefs: strictly monotheistic; Islam means "submission", follow Five Pillars of Islam



D.2. Path and method of diffusion (student needs **any two** of the following):

- In just a hundred years after the death of Mohammed in 630 CE, Islam spread rapidly westward from its Arabian hearth across North Africa, northward into Central Asia and eastward into Northern India. This early spread of Islam is considered by geographers a classic case of contagious diffusion through conquest, conversion, and intermarriage.
- Islam later spread by Arab traders and missionaries (relocation and contagious diffusion) into portions of Sub Saharan Africa and to SE Asia, especially Indonesia and the Philippines.
- The two branches of Islam (Sunni and Shiite) formed over a disagreement of which person had a more rightful claim to succession of leadership from Muhammad.

D.3 Current Distribution (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Islam dominates in Southwest Asia and North Africa and extends eastward into the former Soviet Union and China, with outlying clusters in Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population of any single country.
- Islam is the second-largest world religion (about 1.3 billion adherents) and the fastest growing of the major world religions owing largely to its dominance in countries with high birth rates.
- Muslim populations make up small but growing percentages of Europe and North America.
- 83% of Muslims are Sunni Muslims. The remaining 16% are Shiites who are clustered in Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan.

D.4 Landscape Expression (student needs **any two** of the following):

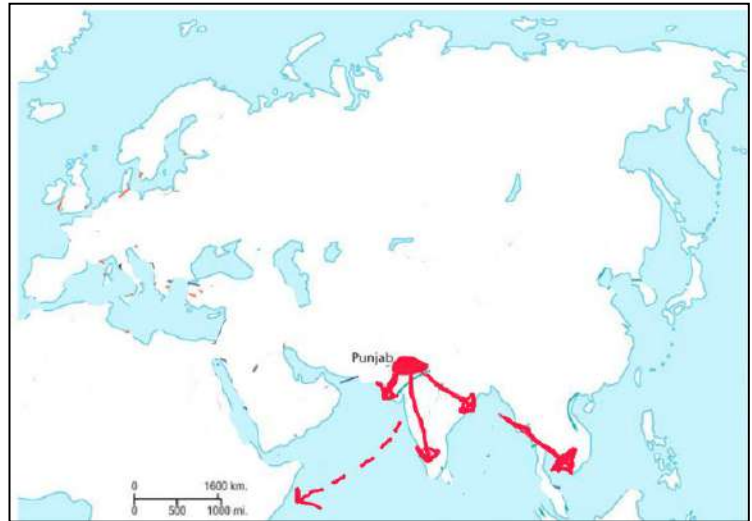
- Muslim mosques are not considered sacred in Islam but instead are important gathering places for worship and community life. For Muslims, the community is more important than the building.
- As a universalizing religion, Islamic holy places are associated with key events in the life of its founder. For Muslims this means Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. The cultural hearth of Islam (Mecca) remains an important location for Muslims today
- Muslims, like Christians and Jews, practice burial in dedicated cemeteries.
- Islam achieved its greatest artistic expression, its most distinctive visible landscape expression, in its architecture. The prohibition against depicting the human form in Islamic art led to the use of elaborate calligraphy and geometric designs.

- Perhaps the most dramatic expression of Islam on the landscape is the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage of millions of Muslims to Mecca and the Ka'ba, the holiest of Islamic shrines. All Muslims physically and financially capable of travelling to Mecca are expected to perform the Hajj at least once in their life.

3. Hinduism

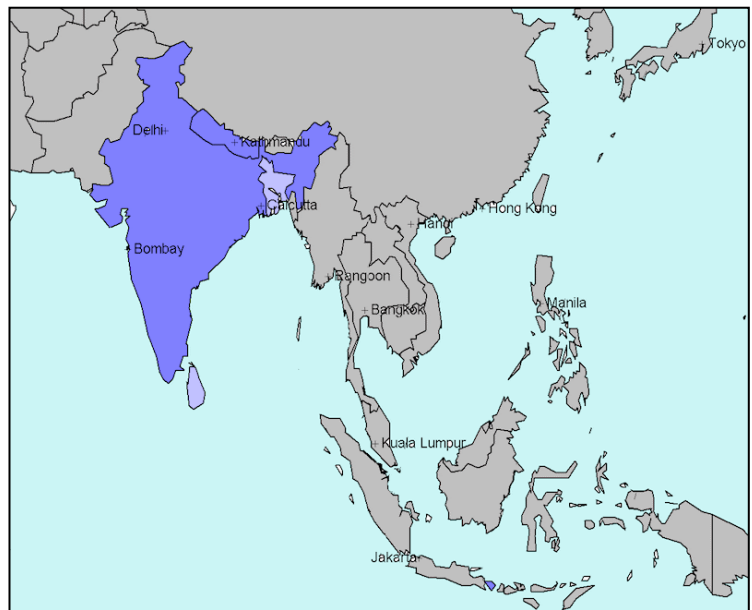
D. 1. Point of Origin/Founder (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Hinduism originated in the Indus River Valley (present day Pakistan) over 4,000 years ago, making it oldest of the major world religions.
- The origins of Hinduism are unclear as they date back to before recorded history.
- As an ethnic religion, Hinduism's origins are not tied to a specific founder or sacred text.
- Beliefs: There is no rigid theology or hierarchy. It is up to the individual to decide how to best worship god. The goal is to attain release from the cycle of karma and reincarnation.



D.2. Path and method of diffusion (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Hinduism spread by contagious diffusion (person to person contact) from its hearth in the Punjab (Northern India/Pakistan) southward throughout the Indian subcontinent and into SE Asia.
- Typical of ethnic religions, Hinduism has not diffused widely but rather has remained concentrated in India.
- Hinduism spread by relocation diffusion to East Africa through the forced migration of Indian workers during the British colonization of India. This created pockets of Hindu communities in East Africa without further diffusion.



D.3 Current Distribution (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Hinduism is the third-largest religion in the world with about 900 million adherents.
- Hinduism is highly clustered with 97 percent of Hindus found in India.
- Although the vast majority Hindus live in India, Hinduism also extends into Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.
- Worshipers of the god Vishnu predominate in western India; worshipers of Shiva predominate in northern and eastern India.

D.4 Landscape Expression (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Hinduism dominates the cultural landscape of India. Temples and shrines to hundreds of deities dot the landscape. Ritual bathing, wandering holy men, and holy animals in the tens of millions, all contribute to make Hinduism an all encompassing sensory experience.
- As an ethnic religion, Hinduism's sacred places are based not on the life of a founder but rather on the physical landscape. To such sacred places for Hindus are the river Ganges, and the source of the Ganges, Mt. Kailas in Nepal.

- Millions of Hindus make a pilgrimage to Hardwar to bathe in the holy river. It is also considered auspicious to be cremated there after death and have one's ashes poured into the holy river. Therefore many Hindus are brought to Hardwar to die.
- Hindu temples are built for the purpose of worshiping one of hundreds of gods rather than for community worship, which is relatively unimportant for Hindus. Most important Hindu rituals and functions take place at home within families.
- Cremation is considered by Hindus to be an act of purification and is generally preferred to burial as a means of disposing of the dead.
- The most pervasive imprint of Hinduism on Indian culture is its traditional caste system, under which a person is assigned by birth to a particular class in which he remains for life. Traditionally the Hindu caste system determined to a large extent the location, professions, movements (activity spaces), social relations, food preferences, and dress of individual Hindus.

4. Buddhism

D. 1. Point of Origin/Founder (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Buddhism originated near modern day Nepal in the 6th c. BCE (around 530 BCE).
- Buddhism is a universalizing religion based on the life and teachings of its founder Siddhartha Gautama, who is believed by believers to have achieved enlightenment (Buddha means "one who has awakened".)
- Siddhartha Gautama rejected the strict social caste system of Hinduism, the parent religion out of which Buddhism arose.
- The hundreds of gods in Buddhism represent various psychological states of human beings as well as the basic impulses of nature.

D.2. Path and method of diffusion (student needs **any two** of the following):

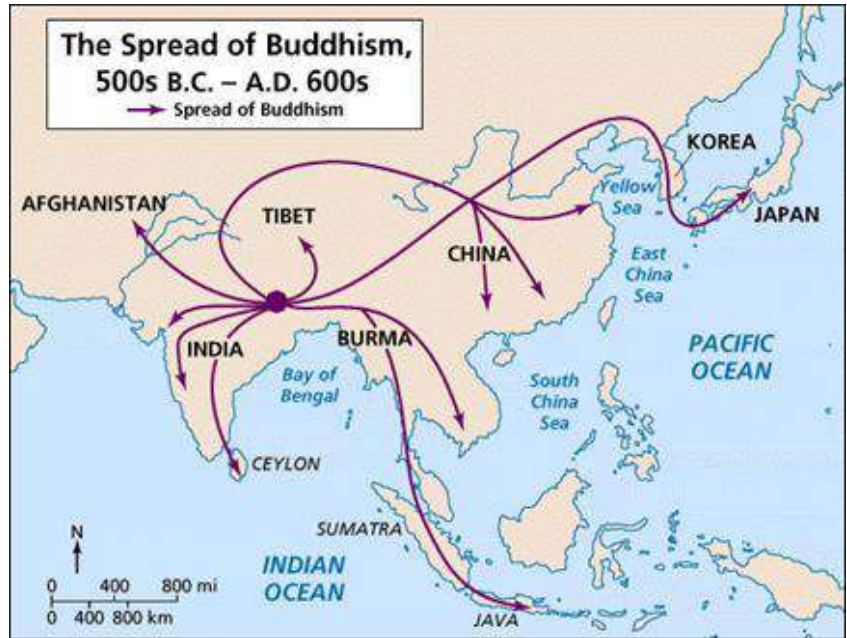
- Buddhism grew slowly following the Buddha's death until the middle of the third century B.C. when the Emperor Asoka became a convert.

Asoka established Buddhism in SE Asia by sending missionaries through India, and to Sri Lanka and Burma.

- Around 100 CE traders brought Buddhism into China where it grew and blended with traditional Chinese religions (syncretism). By 600 CE it had spread to Korea and Japan. Importantly however, by this time Buddhism has lost its dominance in India, its original hearth.
- Buddhism is a *nonevangelizing* universal religion. Adherents believe they have found (or are seeking) a universal truth but in general do not actively seek converts. This, along with physical barriers (oceans, Tibetan Himalayas, Tibetan Plateau) may explain why Buddhism diffused much more slowly than the other universalizing religions (Christianity, Islam).

D.3 Current Distribution (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Buddhism has about 400 million followers, making it the fourth largest of the world religions. The number of Buddhist is especially difficult to count because many Buddhists do not participate in Buddhist instruction and because Buddhism, in contrast to Christianity and Islam, does not require exclusive adherence, so many Buddhists also follow ethnic religions.
- Buddhist are found mainly in East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) and SE Asia (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Burma).
- Buddhism split into two branches, a monastic (think monks) branch called Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism predominates in SE Asia (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Burma) while Mahayana Buddhism is dominant in East Asia (China, Korea, Japan).



D.4 Landscape Expression (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Sacred sites for Buddhists include places associated with key events in the life of the Buddha. These include Lumbini, his birth place; Bodh Gaya, the site of the Bo tree under which the Buddha is thought to have attained enlightenment; the Deer Park in Sarnath, where he gave his first sermon; and Kusingara, where he died and passed into a state of nirvana or peaceful extinction.
- The Bodhi tree ("tree of enlightenment"), the type of tree under which the Buddha is thought to have attained enlightenment, is revered and protected by Buddhists. It has diffused as far as China and Japan and marks the cultural landscape of many Buddhist villages and towns.
- Buddhist architecture is represented primarily by Pagodas, which are temples often containing images or relics of the Buddha, and stupas, which are commemorative shrines often marking burial grounds.
- In many Buddhist countries, monasteries are the most visible imprint of Buddhism on the cultural landscape.

5. Sikhism

D. 1. Point of Origin/Founder (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded during the 15th century in the Punjab region of northern India by Guru Nanak.
- Sikhism's origins is an example of syncretism, as it incorporated elements of Hinduism and Islam.
- Sikhism is an ethnic religion associated with the Punjab region of India.



D.2. Path and method of diffusion (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Sikhism has remained relatively clustered in the Punjab region of northern India.
- Through hierarchical diffusion, small populations of Sikhs spread to the UK, North America, Australia, and China and started small communities in the respective locations.



D.3 Current Distribution (student needs any two of the following):

- There are roughly 27 million Sikhs worldwide, making it the 5th largest religion in the world.
- Roughly 97% of Sikhs live in the Punjab area of India but Sikh communities exist on every inhabited continent, with the largest emigrant population being Indian Britons in the United Kingdom.
- Other large Sikh populations exist in the United States (500,000), Canada (400,000), and SE Asia (200,000).

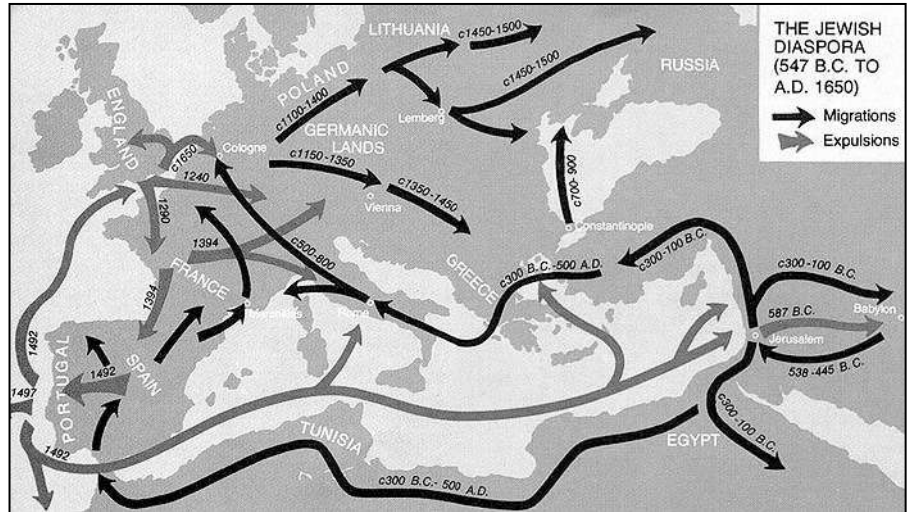
D.4 Landscape Expression (student needs **any two** of the following):

- Sikhs consider the Golden Temple at Amritsar the most holy structure. The holiest book, the *Guru Granth* in Sikhism is kept there.
- Sikhs wear turbans and never cut beards/hair
- Sikhism shares a cultural landscape with Hinduism in India.

6. Judaism

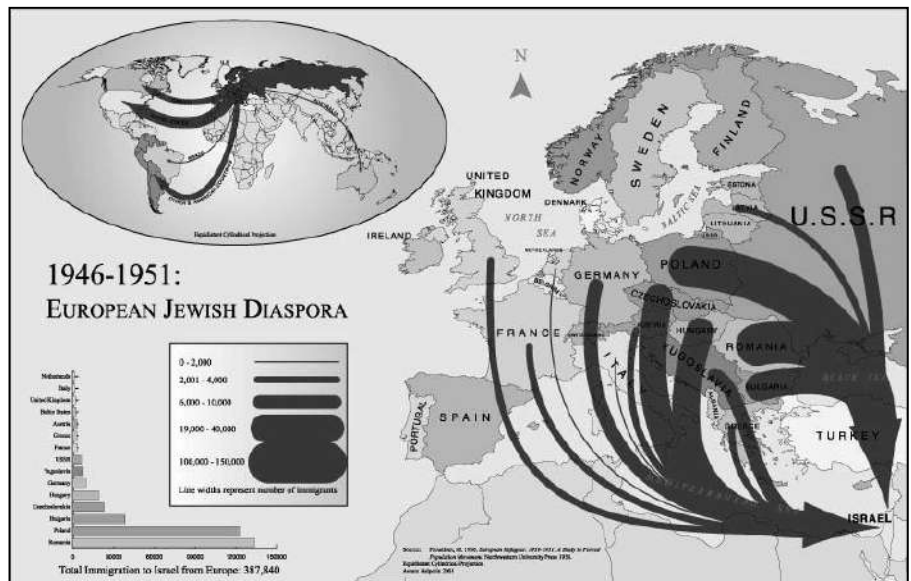
D. 1. Point of Origin/Founder:

- Judaism originated around 2000 BCE in the SW Asia/Eastern Mediterranean region.
- Judaism grew out of the belief system of the Jews, one of several nomadic Semitic tribes living in Southwest Asia around 2000 BCE.
- Judaism is the 2nd oldest major religion (after Hinduism) and the oldest monotheistic religion.
- Christianity and Islam have their roots in Judaism.



D.2. Path and method of diffusion:

- The Romans forced the Jews to disperse from their hearth in the Eastern Mediterranean after 70 AD, an event known as the diaspora. Most Jews migrated to Europe at this time, although some also migrated to North Africa and Asia. Since Judaism is an ethnic religion that does not seek converts, the diaspora was an example of relocation diffusion.
- This forced relocation diffusion (migration) of Judaism represents an exception to the usual concentrated distribution of ethnic religions, which normally remained clustered in one area.
- Six million European Jews were exterminated during WWII. Many survivors of the holocaust and other Jews from around the world have migrated to Israel in the years since its creation as a modern state in 1947.



D.3 Current Distribution:

- Judaism has about 18 million adherents. But because of its worldwide distribution and because both Christianity and Islam owe their origins to Judaism, it has a greater global importance than its relatively small numbers would indicate.
- About one third of Jews live in Israel, one third in North America, and one third elsewhere.
- Israel is the first Jewish majority state since biblical times.
- Jews in the United States are concentrated in big cities, especially in the New York metropolitan area.



D.4 Landscape Expression:

- As is the case with most ethnic religions, Jewish holy places are based on the physical environment of its hearth in the Eastern Mediterranean. For Jews these sacred sites include the Western Wall (Wailing Wall), Temple Mount, and Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River in general.
- Jews practice burial in dedicated cemeteries.
- The most significant architectural expression of Judaism is the synagogue.
- Other visible expression of Judaism are traditional dress, beards, hats, kosher food, and other food taboos.