



EAT, SHARE, LOVE IN DIFFERENT FAITHS

HINDUISM

EAT

Devout Hindus believe that all of God's creatures are worthy of respect and compassion, regardless of whether they are humans or animals. Therefore, Hinduism encourages being vegetarian and avoiding the eating of any animal meat or flesh. However, not all Hindus choose to practice vegetarianism, and they may adhere to the religion's dietary codes in varying degrees of strictness. For example, some Hindus refrain from eating beef and pork, which are strictly prohibited in the Hindu diet code, but do eat other meats. It is believed that knowledge, wisdom and experience are valuable to the process of staying healthy. Eating moderately and consuming simple, pure, healthy foods can save your body and mind.

Food is considered to be a source of the body's chemistry, which affects one's consciousness and emotions. Thus, expression of the soul depends on the body, which depends on the food. A proper diet is considered vital for spiritual development in Hinduism. The Hindu diet code divides food into three categories, based on the food's effect on the body and the temperament:

- **Tamasic** food is leftover, stale, overripe, spoiled or other impure food, which is believed to produce negative emotions, such as anger, jealousy and greed.
- **Rajasic** is food that is believed to produce strong emotional qualities and passions. This category includes meat, eggs, fish, spices, onions, garlic, hot peppers, pickles and other pungent or spicy foods.
- The most desirable type of food, **Sattvic**, is food that is non-irritating to the stomach and purifying to the mind; it includes fruits, nuts, whole grains and vegetables. These foods are believed to produce calmness and nobility.

The Practice of Fasting

Some Hindus practice the tradition of fasting during special occasions, such as holy days, new moon days and festivals. Hindus fast in various ways, depending on the individual. They may choose to not eat at all during the fasting period, or to eat only once, eat only fruits or restrict themselves to a special diet of simple foods.

Fasting is believed to help reinforce control over one's senses, minimise earthly desires and guide the mind to be poised and at peace. Hindus also believe that when there is a spiritual goal behind fasting, it should not make the body weak, irritable, or create an urge to later indulge. Rather, rest and a change of diet during the fasting time is considered to be very good for the digestive system and the entire body. The idea is that every system needs a break and an occasional overhaul to work at its best.

Source : <https://minoritynurse.com/hindu-dietary-practices-feeding-the-body-mind-and-soul/>

SHARE

For Hindus, ***dana*** (giving) is an important part of one's ***dharma*** (religious duty). 'Giving' begins at home but extends beyond home.

Different types of giving

The well known Hindu text the Bhagavadgita speaks of three types of giving:

- A gift that is given without any expectation of appreciation or reward is beneficial to both giver and recipient.
- A gift that is given reluctantly and with the expectation of some advantage is harmful to both giver and recipient.
- A gift that is given without any regard for the feelings of the recipient and at the wrong time, so causing embarrassment to the recipient, is again harmful to both giver and recipient.
(*Bhagavadgita* 17.20-22)

Any giving that is motivated by selfish considerations loses its value from the spiritual point of view.

Sharing food with others

One of the commonest forms of giving is *anna dana*, the sharing of food with others. It is part of one's religious duty (*dharma*) to offer food to any unexpected guest. In the orthodox tradition a householder is expected to partake of food only after it has been reverentially offered to the deities, the ancestors, the mendicant, and those dependent on him. The practice of *anna dana* is common to all sections of Indian society and continues to be an important aspect of people's way of life. On religious and other important occasions *anna dana* may be

undertaken on a large scale. Some Hindus organise a special meal for the needy, or donate to a charitable cause, in memory of the deceased. To refuse hospitality to one who comes to your door is an unpardonable act.

Charity is more than merely giving; it involves the sharing of resources with others, be it wealth, food or other things. It may involve giving to philanthropic causes – providing rest-houses, planting trees, digging wells.

Source: <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/feature/traditions-of-giving-in-hinduism/>

LOVE

In Hinduism the heart has a great significance both as a place where the soul rests and as a representative location of the abode of Brahman. It is the hub and the centre of life. The heart as the seat of divine love.

According to Hinduism, the heart is the connecting link between the heaven and the earth. It is where you experience the love of God, express your love for God, or enter the dream state or deep sleep state. It is the secret cave in your body where you come face to face with the very secret of your existence. Your heart is also your vulnerable spot, and unless you protect it well you can succumb to negative emotions. It is therefore important that you fill your heart with love and positive energy.

The love of Isvara, the manifested God and the Lord of the Universe is without duality and without an object, like an infinite ocean of love in which nothing else exists. It is more intense and powerful than any human being can image. It is not love for any specific thing or being, but love that radiates in all directions and touches anyone and everyone who comes into contact with it, just as the light radiates from the sun as its very essence and touches everything in its path. It is pure love, no evil can touch it or stand before it.

If you want to stay free from negativity, you must fill your heart and mind with love and compassion of the purest kind.

Source: <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/essays/the-meaning-and-significance-of-heart-in-hinduism.asp>

SIKHISM

EAT

Sikhs spend their lives looking to become one with God, and discovering the holy within themselves. Because this spark of holiness is within us all, a Sikh considers one of their first duties is to look after their body and care for it as the container of their soul. To this end, Sikhs avoid any substance that has been seen to do any damage - temporary or permanent - to their bodies.

Some Sikhs will not eat pork, beef or any animal flesh that is halal or kosher, as they will only eat meat that has been processed according to their own rites (jhatka). Sikhs who have taken Amrit (initiated-baptised) are vegetarian or vegan. Some Sikhs will also exclude eggs, fish and any ingredients with animal derivatives or cooked in animal fat from their diet. Some Sikhs will only eat food prepared by their own families. Some Sikhs may also refrain from alcohol and tobacco. Meat, alcohol and tobacco cannot be taken within the grounds of the Gurdwara (the Sikh place of congregational worship).

In the free kitchen of the gurdwara (langar), vegetarian food is always served to all who attend. The Gurus had various opinions on eating meat, but it can generally be concluded that whether to eat meat is largely a personal decision for a Sikh.

Source: http://www.ethnicityonline.net/sikh_diet.htm

SHARE

Concern for others is central to the teachings of Sikhism, as illustrated by the story of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, and his father. Giving to the hungry is seen as giving to God – but only if it is genuine giving from the heart. The giving of alms as a way of gaining hoped-for reward in the hereafter ‘carries no weight’, as a famous verse written by Guru Nanak in the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy scriptures) reminds us: *The true path to God lies in the service of our fellow beings.*

Langar

The Langar or free community kitchen is a hallmark of the Sikh religion. It was established by the first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It is designed to uphold the principle of equality between all people of the world regardless of religion, caste, colour, creed, age, gender, or social status; to eliminate the extreme poverty in the world, and to bring about the birth of "caring communities". In addition to the ideals of equality, the tradition of Langar expresses the ethics of sharing, community, inclusiveness, and the oneness of all humankind.

For the first time in history, Guru Nanak Dev Ji designed an institution in which all people would sit on the floor together, as equals, to eat the same simple food. It is here that all people high or low, rich or poor, male or female, all sit in the same pangat, literally meaning "row" or "line" to share and enjoy the food together.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of the Sikh Religion started the concept of Langar. As a young man, he was given twenty rupees by his father to buy goods and sell at a profit. On seeing holy men who were hungry, the young Guru used the money to feed and clothe them. This investment according to Guru Nanak Dev Ji was 'true' profit or business –'Sacha Saudha'. Using money to feed and clothe the hungry yields the highest profit. The practice of langar was developed by successive Gurus and earned the admiration of people from all walks of life.

LOVE

Love is a very positive and powerful virtue for Sikhs. When one's mind is full of love, the person will overlook deficiency in others and accept them wholeheartedly as a product of God. Sikhism asks all believers to take on "god-like" virtues and this perhaps is the most "god-like" characteristic of all.

Gurbani tells us that Waheguru is a loving God, full of compassion and kindness. It is the duty of the Sikh to take on qualities of this nature and to easily forgive; to never hate anyone; to live in His Hukam (Will) and to practice compassion and humility.

The Guru Granth Sahib informs us that a mind which harbours love is painted in the Lord's colours thus: *"My mind is imbued with the Lord's Love; it is dyed a deep crimson. Truth and charity are my white clothes."* (SGGS p 16) One's mind has to be immersed in love of the Lord at all times to comply with this line from Gurbani: *practice truth and charity and the real gifts of human life will be yours.*

Source : <https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Pyare>

ISLAM

EAT

Islamic dietary law distinguishes between food and drink that are allowed (*halal*) and those that are prohibited (*haram*).

Muslims are allowed to eat what is "good" that is, food and drink identified as pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing and pleasing to the taste. In general, everything is allowed (*halal*) except what has been specifically forbidden. For Islam, a "law of necessity" allows for prohibited acts to occur if no viable alternative exists. For example, in an instance of possible starvation, it would be considered non-sinful to consume otherwise forbidden food or drink if no *halal* were available.

Muslims are enjoined by their religion to abstain from eating certain foods. This is said to be in the interest of health and cleanliness, and in obedience to the Allah's rules. In the Quran, the following foods and drinks are strictly prohibited (*haram*):

- Dead meat (i.e. the carcass of an already-dead animal—one that was not slaughtered by the proper method).
- Blood.
- The flesh of swine (pork).
- Intoxicating drinks. For observant Muslims, this even includes sauces or food-preparation liquids that might include alcohol
- The meat of an animal that has been sacrificed to idols.
- The meat of an animal that died from electrocution, strangulation or blunt force.
- Meat from which wild animals have already eaten.

In Islam, much attention is given to the manner in which animals' lives are taken in order to provide food, because in the Islamic tradition, life is sacred and one must kill only with God's permission, to meet one's lawful need for food. The animal should not suffer in any way, and should not see the blade before slaughter. The knife must be razor sharp and free from any blood of a previous slaughter. All of the animal's blood must be drained before consumption. Meat prepared in this manner is called *zabihah*, or simply, *halal meat*. These rules do not apply to fish or other aquatic meat sources, which are all regarded as *halal*.

Source: <https://www.learnreligions.com/islamic-dietary-law-2004234>

SHARE

In Islam, giving a percentage of your annual profitable disposable income is an obligation upon qualifying Muslims. Not only does this go a long way towards promoting an equal and balanced society, but sharing God-given wealth amongst others is a way of ridding oneself of any greed and materialism and purifying souls in the process.

Not only does helping others open one's eyes to the ongoing issues of the world, but it also instils compassion and empathy for others within and pulls away from potentially selfless acts as a result. It is considered that the notion of giving to others also acts as a great reminder that nothing that is owned in this world actually belongs to us to begin with. It is the duty of human beings to ensure that efforts are made to eradicate poverty and hunger from this world.

Source: <https://www.islamichelp.org.uk/media-centre/news/why-giving-is-important-in-islam/>

LOVE

Islam encourages showing affection and love towards each other all the time. In a *Hadeeth* (narration), the Prophet, said: ***"When a man loves his brother, he should tell him that he loves him."*** [Abu Daawood and At-Tirmithi]

Love in Islam is all-encompassing, comprehensive and sublime.

Love of God helps avoid committing sins. This love also urges you to contemplate all the different aspect of nature that usually lead you to have a deeper faith in the Creator who created all this beauty round us. Loving the Prophet Muhammad encourages people to follow his example in all his dealings and manners.

Human love is also mentioned. It means that the Muslim has to love his other fellow men regardless of their ethnic, linguistic or cultural background. This includes love of neighbors, colleagues, relatives and even strangers. This type of love persuades the Muslim to help anybody whenever he can. There are numerous of Ahadith that exhort Muslims to help anybody who really needs help because such an altruistic act takes the Muslim one step closer to Allah.

CHRISTIANITY

EAT

Christians observe several traditions related to food, including fasting and feasts enjoyed during religious holidays. Certain foods, though, have sacred meaning, e.g.

- Easter egg - associated with Easter, as a symbol of new life
- Pancakes - traditionally eaten on Shrove Tuesday to symbolise the end of rich eating before Lent (which begins the following day)

Bread and Wine

Bread and wine relate to the Lord's Supper. According to tradition, Jesus Christ set aside wine and unleavened bread at his last supper with his disciples. Jesus commanded the disciples to remember him by eating bread, signifying his body, and drinking wine, signifying his blood; this sacrament is called the Eucharist or communion. A Catholic belief relating to the Eucharist is transubstantiation: When a validly ordained priest consecrates the bread and wine, Christ's body and blood become present in the substance of this food.

Fish

Fish has significance as both a food and a symbol. During the first centuries after Christ, Christians used a fish symbol to identify fellow Christians when Christians were undergoing persecution. The Bible contains references to fish, such as the story of Jesus feeding 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread. Catholics traditionally abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent but they can eat fish on that day. In fact, some cultures eat fish as a festive meal. For example, on Christmas Eve, Italians traditionally partake of the Feast of the Seven Fishes, when seven kinds of fish are served.

SHARE

Christianity is a religion of self-denial and commitment (Matthew 16:24-26). The teaching and behavior of the church of God is sharing, not holding. Acts 2:44-45 says of the Christians in Jerusalem: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need." (See also Acts 4:32-35). There was a need in the church in Jerusalem. To meet that need, the Christians, who had property, willingly sold it and gave the money to help feed their fellow Christians.

There are many examples of such unselfish sharing in the New Testament. In Acts 4:36-37, we read of Barnabas, who sold his field, and gave the money to the apostles to help others. In Acts 6:1-7, we read of needy widows who were fed by the church. In Acts 11:27-30, we read of prophets who told the church at Antioch of a great famine, which was coming. "And the

disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul." In Acts 20:35, Paul, the apostle, reminded the elders at the church at Ephesus of his example: "In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The New Testament teaches that we must give in order to help those who are in need (Matthew 25:34-40; I John 3:17). We must also give in order to help support the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:3-5). By our giving, we show our love for one another (Acts 4:32-35). By our giving to the Lord and His work, we also are laying up treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Source: <https://truthfortheworld.org/christianity-is-sharing,-not-holding>

LOVE

Here are six things that the scriptures say about loving others.

1 Corinthians 13: 4–6 - "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth."

1 John 4: 7–8 - "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

Matthew 22: 37–40 - "And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

1 Corinthians 13: 7–10 - "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."

Matthew 5: 43–47 - "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven"

1 Corinthians 13: 1–3 "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

BUDDHISM

EAT

Some Buddhists are vegetarian or vegan due to the first ethical precept of the faith which is to refrain from killing living beings. In the Theravada school of Buddhism, monks do not choose what they eat as they rely on donations for their food, so they may not always eat vegetarian. As Buddhism seeks detachment from desires, this also includes the desire to eat. Fasting is also part of monastic life. The monks only make two meals a day, one in the morning and another before noon. Some Buddhists fast on a new moon and full moon days and on specific festival days such as Buddha's birthday, his death day, his enlightenment, his first sermon and others.

SHARE

If beings knew, as I know, the results of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would the stain of selfishness overcome their minds. Even if it were their last bite, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared, if there were someone to receive their gift.

—Itivuttaka 26

The practice of giving, or *dana* in Pali, has a preeminent place in the teachings of the Buddha. When he taught a graduated series of practices for people to engage in as they progress along the path, he always started by talking about the importance and benefits of the practice of generosity. Once a person had awakened, the Buddha often instructed him or her to go out to benefit others, to be of service. Service can be seen as an act of generosity, so the Buddhist path begins and ends with this virtue.

Dana refers to the act of giving and to the donation itself. The Buddha used the word *cage* to refer to the inner virtue of generosity that ensures that *dana* is connected to the Path. This use of *cage* is particularly significant because it also means “relinquishment” or “renunciation.” An act of generosity entails giving more than is required, customary, or expected relative to one's resources and circumstances. In addition, generosity entails relinquishing some aspects of one's self-interest, and thus is a giving of one's self. The Buddha stressed that the spiritual efficacy of a gift is dependent not on the amount given but rather on the attitude with which it is given. A small donation that stretches a person of little means is considered of greater spiritual consequence than a large but personally insignificant donation from a wealthy person.

The Buddha emphasised the joy of giving. *Dana* is not meant to be obligatory or done reluctantly. Rather, *dana* should be performed when the giver is “delighted before, during, and after giving.” At its most basic level, *dana* in the Buddhist tradition means giving freely without expecting anything in return. The act of giving is purely out of compassion or goodwill, or the

desire for someone else's well-being. Through generosity, we cultivate a generous spirit. Although giving for the purposes of helping others is an important part of the motivation and joy of giving, the Buddha considered giving for the purpose of attaining nibbana as the highest motivation. For this purpose, "one gives gifts to adorn and beautify the mind." Among these adornments are non-clinging, lovingkindness, and concern for the well-being of others.

Source: <https://tricycle.org/magazine/joy-giving/>

LOVE

The four qualities of love as outlined in Buddhism are **friendliness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity**.

'Metta Bhavana' or Loving-Kindness Meditation is a meditation practice taught by the Buddha over 2500 years ago to develop a mental habit of selfless and altruistic love. In Theravada tradition, loving-kindness is towards all sentient beings, while in Tibetan Buddhist tradition the monks practice 'tonglen' whereby one breathes out and 'sends' happiness and breathes in and 'receives' suffering.

Metta meditation is used to develop the four qualities of love. The commonest form of the practice is in five stages. In the first stage, you feel metta (loving-kindness) for yourself. In the second stage you think of a good friend and send out compassionate thoughts to them. In the third stage you think of someone you do not particularly like or dislike, a 'neutral' person. In the fourth stage you think of someone you dislike or an enemy. In the final stage, you think of all four people together — yourself, the friend, the neutral person, and the enemy. Then you extend your feelings of loving-kindness further — to everyone around you, to everyone in your neighbourhood; in your town, your country, and so on throughout the world. You have a sense of waves of loving-kindness spreading from your heart to everyone, to all beings everywhere into theirs.

More information at: <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/loving-kindness-meditation>

JUDAISM

EAT

Shabbat

Shabbat is the centerpiece of Jewish life. Shabbat is a day of rest and celebration that begins on Friday at sunset and ends on the following evening after nightfall. On Friday night a special prayer is said over wine in a ritual known as *kiddush* (sanctification). After *kiddush*, Shabbat is celebrated with a sumptuous feast. The meals begin with two whole loaves of bread, which remind Jewish people of the double portion of manna which God sent from heaven to feed the Israelites in the desert. Typical European-Jewish Shabbat fare includes *gefilte* fish, chicken soup, and kugels, but the Shabbat meals really can feature whatever is festive and delicious. Aside from the physical enjoyment of the feast, the Shabbat meal often includes heartwarming stories, songs and Torah thoughts so that the meal is a delight for the soul as well. Just like Shabbat was welcomed in with wine, it is ushered out with another cup of wine in a special ceremony known as *Havdalah* which includes blessings recited over fragrant spices.

Source: https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/633659/jewish/What-Is-Shabbat.htm

Food Laws

Observant Jewish believers will only eat food that is 'kosher'. Kosher animals have a completely split hoof and chew cud, for example cows, goat and sheep. Pigs and rabbits are not kosher animals. Domestic fowl such as chicken and turkey are permitted and birds of prey are not. In addition, the animal must be killed and prepared by religiously-trained personnel, to ensure that the animal does not suffer and as much blood as possible is drained from the meat.

Kosher fish must have fins and scales, therefore all shellfish, eels and shark are excluded. Animal products (such as milk and eggs) must come from a kosher animal. All plant foods are kosher, but must be checked to ensure there are no insects. Jewish believers who keep kosher will not mix milk and meat dishes or eat them in the same meal, and will wait some hours between these kinds of foods (in the UK generally 3 hours). A kosher household will keep meat and milk utensils, crockery and cutlery rigidly separate.

There are a number of fast days in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur is the most important holy day of the year for most Jewish believers and many will observe a 25-hour fast beginning before sunset on the evening before and ending at nightfall. During the Pesach (Passover), which occurs in the spring, there are additional dietary stringencies, for example no leavened bread or cakes are permitted and instead unleavened bread called matzah is eaten.

SHARE

In the Hebrew language the closest word to philanthropy is **tzedakah**. While the word is used interchangeably for charity, tzedakah is seen as a form of social justice. In ancient times, the Hebrew Torah was intended for a primarily agricultural economy and addressed the tzedakah in agrarian terms. For example, at harvest time, the Torah instructs believers to leave crops standing in the corners of fields to allow the poor to reap needed food for survival. However, as the economy of the Near East diversified, rabbis addressed the tzedakah in financial terms. Public and private funds were created to help support people in need. Food banks and soup kitchens were developed at a time of no governmental assistance. The sages shaped post-biblical Judaism and used the word tzedakah for charitable activity. The root word of tzedakah means "justice" and implies the rabbis viewed social welfare as an economic and social justice matter.

Tzedakah is more than giving money to the poor. Done properly, tzedakah requires the donor share his or her compassion and empathy along with the money. In the writings of Maimonides, "whoever gives tzedakah to the poor with a sour expression and in a surly manner, even if he gives a thousand gold pieces, loses his merit. One should instead give cheerfully and joyfully, and emphasize with him in his sorrow" (Just Tzedakah 1998).

Tzedakah has two aspects: one with the hand and one with the heart. Judaism teaches the belief that donors benefit from tzedakah as much or more than the poor recipients and the belief remains a common theme in Jewish tradition. Whereas the poor receive money or other material assistance, the donor receives the merit of sharing the Almighty's work.

Source: <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/jewish-philanthropy-concept-tzedakah>

LOVE

One of the core commandments of Judaism is to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). The commandment emboldens individuals to treat each other as equals which requires first valuing oneself in order to be able to mirror that love onto others.

Tanḥuma, in Genesis Rabbah l.c. explains it thus: "If thou despisest any man, thou despisest God who made man in His image." Hillel took the Biblical command in a universal spirit when he responded to the heathen who requested him to tell the Law while standing before him on one foot: "What is hateful to thee, thou shalt not do unto thy neighbour. This is the whole of the Law, the rest is only commentary" (Shab. 31a). The Talmud insists that even the criminal at the time of execution should be treated with tender love (Sanh. 45a).

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, a Jewish historian believed that at the core of Judaism the covenantal model between the Jewish people, God, and the Land of Israel, explains our "obligation to respond to the needs of the other." Tirosh-Samuelson thought about the possible meanings when this model was expanded to include the earth as a whole, showing the importance of treating all living creatures with respect. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_views_on_love