



What Is
Freedom?



What Is Freedom?



What does the word **freedom** mean to you?

What does it mean to people in your family?

Do you think everyone agrees with the same definition of **freedom**?

What might someone with a different opinion to you think?

Why do you think people find it hard to agree about the meaning of freedom?

Today, we are going to look at how different religions define the meaning of freedom based on their teachings.

Dictionary Definitions

Freedom

The power or right to speak or think as one wants.

The right to act in the way you think you should.

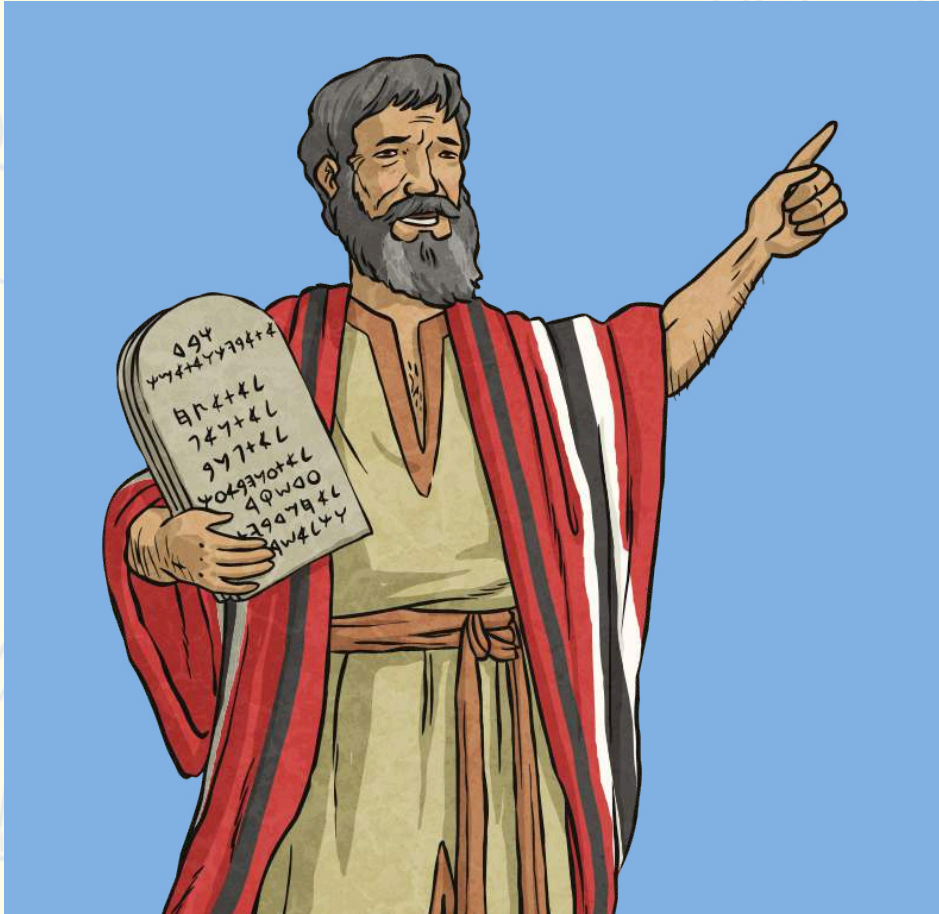
The state of not being imprisoned or enslaved.

Freedom from something undesirable.



Definition

(Jewish)



"Let my people go, so they may serve me."

Moses was not asking for the Jews to be freed so they could do what they liked.

They were to be freed so they could practise their religion freely.

In this way, freedom is not simply the freedom to do things but also the freedom to not do things that they consider to be morally wrong.

Definition

(Buddhist)

“Just as in the great ocean there is but one taste - the taste of salt - so in this doctrine and discipline there is but one taste - the taste of freedom.”



Buddhists believe that the most important freedom is freedom from suffering. Dharma is the discipline of practising freedom from suffering which can be found by following the eightfold path:

- Right View
- Right Thought
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Mindfulness
- Right Contemplation

Buddhists believe that following the eightfold path will result in freedom.

Definition

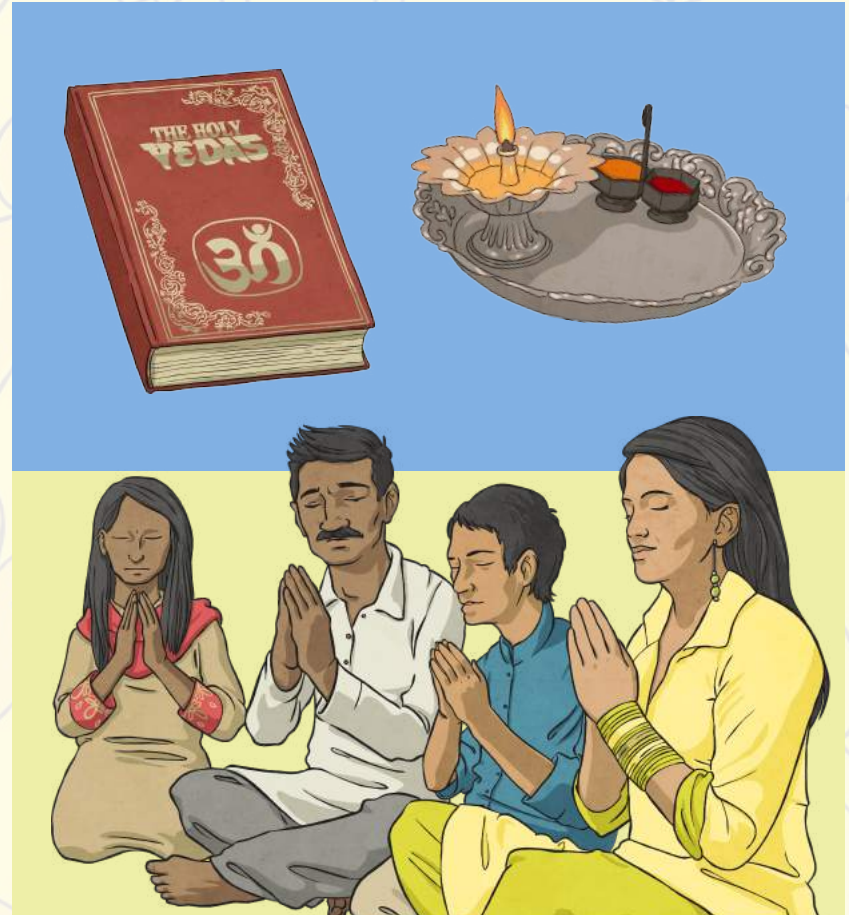
(Hindu)

Hindus believe that we should have no restraints on freedom of reason, thought, feeling and will.

However, this needs to be grounded in Hindu ideas of the goals of human life including moksha - freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth (samsara), so that a person can just be one with God forever.

Moksha can be achieved through knowledge, meditation, worship and good deeds.

Is this absolute freedom? What does freedom mean here?



Definition

(Christian)



“Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.” **1 Peter 2:16**

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:32



“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

Nelson Mandela

“In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.



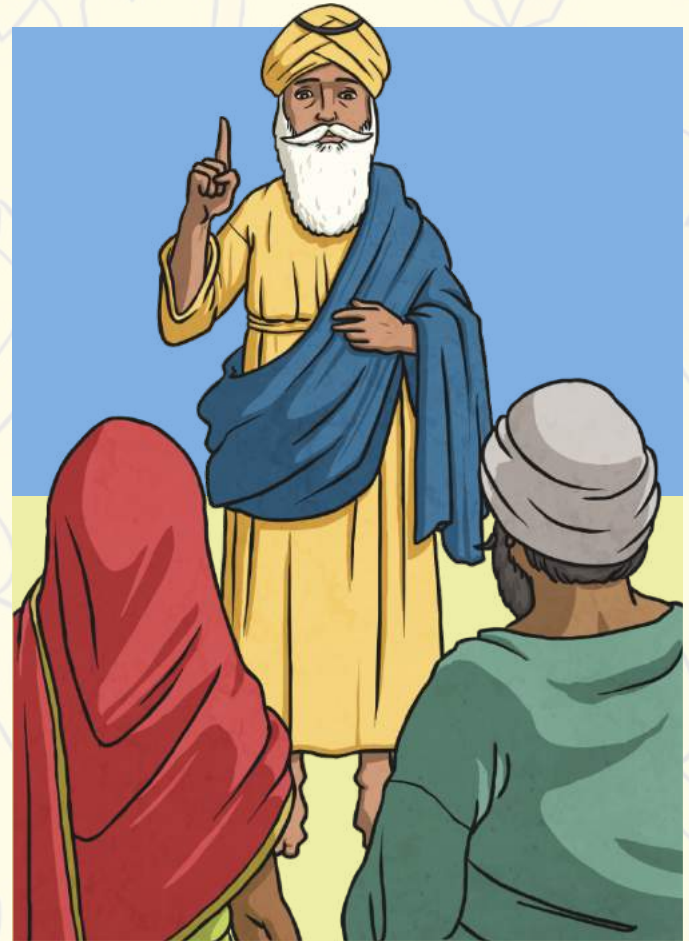
Definition

(Sikh)

The Sikh Gurus believed that people should have complete freedom to choose their beliefs.

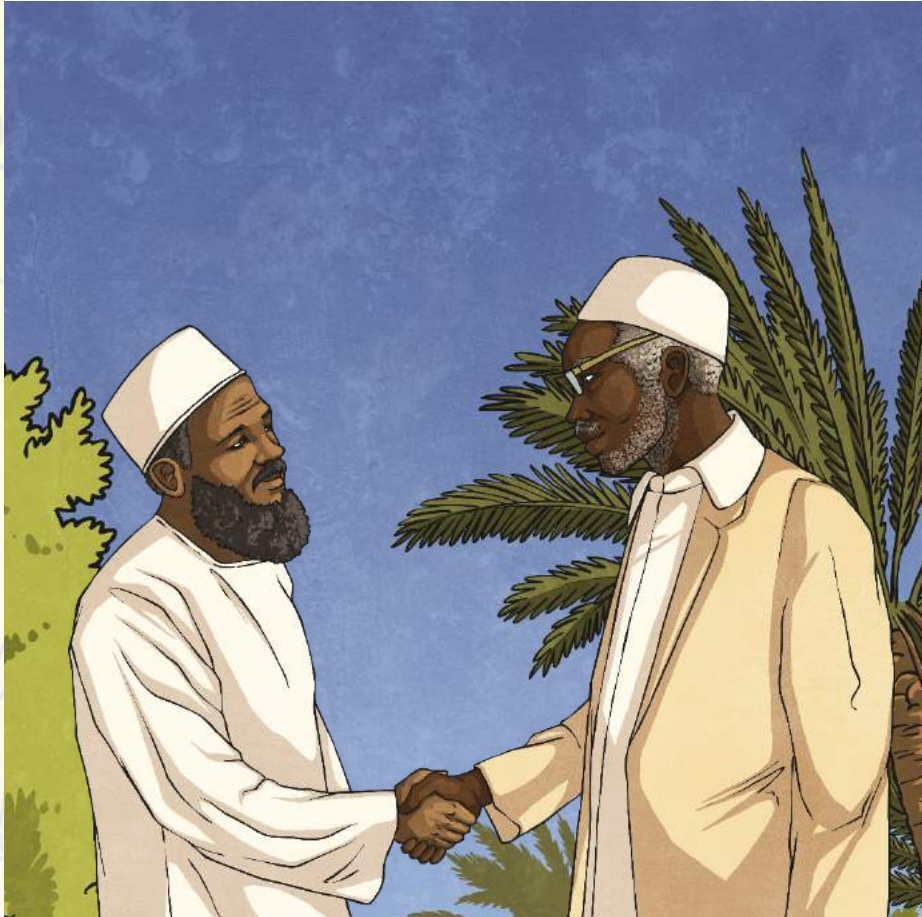
They also believe that people gain freedom by doing the right thing and avoiding doing the wrong thing.

In this way freedom is not doing whatever you want but the freedom for all to live their lives in a happy, healthy, moral and spiritual way.



Definition

(Muslim)



The word Islam means
“submission to God.”

Muslims believe that God has given them free will (the ability to think) to make good choices.

“No one’s freedom should violate the freedom of others.”



What Kind of Freedom?

Find this sheet on our class page



What Kind of Freedom?

Read the **Beliefs about Freedom** sheet and sort them into the dictionary definition of the word freedom.

Definitions	Beliefs	Example
The power or right to speak or think as one wants.	Write down the belief and the person/religion next to it.	Give an example of what this freedom might be.
The right to act in the way you think you should.		
The state of not being imprisoned or enslaved.	"Let my people go, so they may serve me" (Judaism, the story of Moses)	Freedom from being owned and to practise your religion.
Freedom from something undesirable.		

