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What religion are Australian Aboriginal people? Learn about their spiritual beliefs, ceremonies, and connection with the land. When we think of religion, we often associate it with organized churches, holy books, and strict doctrines. However, for the Australian Aboriginal people, religion is something much more fluid and nuanced. Their spirituality is deeply rooted in their connection to the land, their ancestors, and the Dreamtime a mythical era that predates human memory. In this paragraph, we will explore the fascinating religious beliefs and practices of the Australian Aboriginal people, delving into their rich cultural heritage and the ways in which they have preserved their traditions despite centuries of colonization and oppression.IntroductionAustralia is a land of many cultures, with the Indigenous Australian culture being one of the oldest and most unique. The Aboriginal people have lived on this land for over 60,000 years and have a rich spiritual heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation. In this article, we will explore the religion of the Australian Aboriginal people, their beliefs, customs, and practices.The DreamtimeThe Dreamtime is the foundation of Aboriginal spirituality and mythology. It is the time when the world was created, and all living things were formed. The Dreamtime is a complex concept that encompasses the past, present, and future. It is the time when spirits and ancestors roamed the earth and created everything we see today.The Creator SpiritThe Creator Spirit is known by many names, such as Baiame, Bunjil, or Waramurungundi. He is the god-like figure who created the world in the Dreamtime. He is also responsible for the laws and customs that govern Aboriginal life.TotemsTotems are an essential part of Aboriginal religion. They are symbols of the Dreamtime and represent a spiritual connection to a particular animal, plant, or natural feature. Totems are believed to have the power to protect and guide individuals and their families throughout their lives.The Rainbow SerpentThe Rainbow Serpent is one of the most important spiritual beings in Aboriginal culture. It is a powerful and ancient symbol of creation, fertility, and life. The Rainbow Serpent is believed to have created the land, waterways, and all living things.TaboosTaboos are sacred rules that govern Aboriginal life. They are passed down from generation to generation and are designed to maintain harmony between humans and the natural world. Breaking a taboo can result in punishment from the spirit world.Ceremonies and RitualsCeremonies and rituals are an essential part of Aboriginal religious practice. They are often performed to mark significant events such as birth, initiation, marriage, and death. These ceremonies are designed to connect individuals with their ancestors, spirits, and the Dreamtime.Art and StorytellingArt and storytelling have always played a vital role in Aboriginal culture. They are used to pass down knowledge, history, and spiritual beliefs from one generation to the next. Aboriginal art and storytelling often feature symbols and motifs that represent the Dreamtime and other spiritual beings.The Stolen GenerationsThe Stolen Generations refer to Indigenous children who were forcibly taken from their families by the Australian government between 1910 and 1970. This practice was an attempt to assimilate Indigenous people into mainstream Australian society. The impact of the Stolen Generations on Aboriginal culture and spirituality has been profound and long-lasting.ConclusionThe religion of the Australian Aboriginal people is rich, complex, and deeply intertwined with their culture and history. It is a testament to their resilience and strength that these spiritual beliefs and practices have survived for over 60,000 years. Today, many Aboriginal people continue to practice their traditional religion alongside other religions such as Christianity and Islam. Aboriginal spirituality and culture are an essential part of Australias identity and should be celebrated and respected.The religion of Australian Aboriginal people is deeply intertwined with their culture and way of life. At the heart of their beliefs lies the Dreamtime, a creation story that forms the basis of their spirituality and guides their practices. According to this belief system, the universe was created by ancestral beings who shaped the land, animals, and plants. The Dreamtime also teaches that humans were created from the earth, and that they are connected to the natural world in a profound way.One of the key aspects of Aboriginal spirituality is the connection with the land. This belief holds that the land is a living entity with a spirit that needs to be respected and cared for. This bond between Indigenous people and nature is central to their spirituality, and it is believed that the land provides them with everything they need to live.Ancestors play an important role in Aboriginal religion, as they are believed to continue to guide and teach the living. The spirits of ancestors are often called upon to offer guidance and strength, and their wisdom is passed down through generations. Ancestor worship is a key feature of Aboriginal ceremonies, which are held to mark important events such as initiation, healing, and the changing of the seasons.Totems are another important aspect of Aboriginal religion, as they are sacred symbols that are associated with particular clans or groups within Aboriginal communities. These symbols are believed to represent qualities or traits that the group is known for, and they are often depicted in art and other cultural expressions.Ceremonies are at the heart of Aboriginal spirituality, and they play a central role in maintaining the balance between the spiritual and physical worlds. These can be for initiation, healing, celebrations of the seasons, or other significant events. Ceremonies often involve singing, dancing, and the use of sacred objects, and they are a way for the community to come together and connect with the spiritual realm.Aboriginal belief systems include the existence of a range of spirits and supernatural entities, such as nature spirits, ancestral spirits, and spirits associated with local landmarks. These entities are believed to have the power to influence the physical world, and they are often invoked in ceremonies and other spiritual practices.Songlines are another important aspect of Aboriginal spirituality. These are intricate maps that depict the routes taken by ancestral beings during creation, and they are essentially oral histories that detail the importance of particular places. Songlines have been passed down through generations, and they serve as a way for Aboriginal people to connect with their ancestors and the land.Taboos also play a role in Aboriginal culture, serving as prohibitions or restrictions on certain behaviors or practices. These taboos are often associated with certain sacred objects or places, and they are seen as a way to maintain the balance of the spiritual and physical worlds.Aboriginal culture has complex kinship systems, which determine social relationships and responsibilities. These systems have a spiritual dimension, as they serve to connect people with the spiritual world and their ancestors. Gender roles are also an important part of Aboriginal culture and spirituality. These roles are often reflected in ceremonies and other cultural practices, with specific duties assigned to men and women.In conclusion, the religion of Australian Aboriginal people is a rich and complex system of beliefs and practices that is deeply connected to their culture and way of life. From the Dreamtime to the connection with the land, from ancestor worship to totems and ceremonies, Aboriginal spirituality is a testament to the resilience and wisdom of this ancient culture.Once upon a time, the Australian Aboriginal people lived in harmony with nature. Their deep connection with the land and the spirits of their ancestors shaped their way of life and beliefs. Here are some points about the religion of the Australian Aboriginal people:1. The Dreamtime: The Dreamtime is the foundation of Australian Aboriginal spirituality. It is a creation story that explains the origins of the universe, the land, and the people. The Dreamtime is not just a mythology but a living reality that continues to shape the present and the future.2. Ancestor Spirits: The Aboriginal people believe that their ancestors continue to guide and protect them. These ancestor spirits are present in the land, the animals, and the natural elements. They are also honored through ceremonies, songs, and dances.3. Connection to Land: For the Aboriginal people, the land is not just a physical space but a sacred entity. They believe that the land has a spirit that must be respected and cared for. Their spiritual connection to the land is reflected in their art, stories, and rituals.4. Kinship and Community: The Aboriginal people have a complex system of kinship that defines their relationships and responsibilities. This system is based on the idea of sharing and caring for one another. The community plays a vital role in their religious practices and ceremonies.From the perspective of the Aboriginal people, their religion is not separate from their daily lives but an integral part of it. Their spirituality is based on respect, reciprocity, and interconnectedness. It is a way of being in the world that honors the past, the present, and the future.As outsiders, we should approach their religion with humility, openness, and curiosity. We should avoid imposing our own beliefs and values on them but listen to their stories, learn from their traditions, and appreciate their wisdom.Dear visitors,As we come to the end of our discussion about the religions of Australian Aboriginal people, it is important to reflect on what we have learned. The Aboriginal culture is one that is rich in tradition, spirituality, and belief systems. Their connection to the land, ancestors, and spirits is deeply embedded in their everyday lives and practices.Despite the diversity among different Aboriginal groups, there are some common threads that run through their religious beliefs. For example, the Dreamtime and the significance of certain animals and natural elements are central to many Aboriginal religions. Additionally, the idea of a creator being and the importance of ritual and ceremony are also widespread.It is important to note that the Aboriginal culture and religion are not static or fixed, but rather constantly evolving and adapting to changing circumstances. Despite the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities over the years, their spiritual and cultural traditions remain strong and continue to be passed down from generation to generation.As we conclude this discussion, we hope that you have gained a greater understanding and appreciation for the rich diversity of Australian Aboriginal religion. We encourage you to continue learning about the culture and beliefs of Aboriginal people, and to approach them with an open mind and respectful attitude. Thank you for joining us on this journey of discovery.People also ask about the religion of Australian Aboriginals. Here are some commonly asked questions and their answers:Do Australian Aboriginals have a religion?Yes, Australian Aboriginals have a rich spiritual tradition that is deeply connected to the land and nature. Their religion is often referred to as Dreamtime or Dreaming.What is Dreamtime?Dreamtime is the Aboriginal belief system that explains how the world was created and how it functions. It also includes stories and customs that guide everyday life.What role does the land play in Aboriginal religion?The land is central to Aboriginal spirituality. It is believed that the land has its own spirit and that all living beings are connected to it. Many Aboriginal rituals and ceremonies are held on specific land formations or sacred sites.Is there a hierarchy in Aboriginal religion?No, there is no formal hierarchy in Aboriginal religion. Each person is considered equal and has their own unique connection to the land and spiritual realm.Are there any specific religious practices or rituals?Yes, there are many practices and rituals that vary between different Aboriginal groups. Some common practices include initiation ceremonies, dance, and storytelling.Overall, Australian Aboriginals have a deep spiritual connection to the land and nature. Their religion, Dreamtime, is a complex belief system that encompasses creation stories, customs, and everyday practices. For example, a person connected with a yam (native potato) totem might believe that he was a yam in a previous life, that some yams are his relatives, and that a particularly prominent rock feature in his clan estate represents the embodiment of his yam ancestor. This, or another area nearby, might also be an increase centre where rituals are performed to ensure the maintenance of this food supply. Each clan will have several totems, so this person will have a close human relative living on the same clan estate who is not of the yam totem. That person might belong to the kangaroo totem and similarly be related to kangaroos and have another feature of the landscape representing their kangaroo totem. Bookmark Copy this link, or click below to email it to a friend Email or copy the link directly: Sign in Article Navigation Show Summary Details Page of Printed from Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Religion. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a single article for personal use (for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice). date: 31 May 2025 You do not currently have access to this article Please login to access the full content. Access to the full content requires a subscription Australian Aboriginal spirituality is a rich and complex system of beliefs that connects Aboriginal Australians deeply to their land, ancestors, and each other. Its a worldview that interweaves myth, history, and natural law, where every aspect of life is seen as interconnected and meaningful. Central to this spirituality are several key concepts, each of which adds depth to the Aboriginal understanding of the world and human experience.1. The DreamtimeThe Dreamtime, also known by various names including altjira, lalai, altjiranga, alcheringa, wongar, and djugurba, is the mythological period when ancestral beings created the world. In Aboriginal beliefs, the Dreamtime is not just a myth or story; it is a timeless, spiritual plane that connects past, present, and future.In the Dreamtime, powerful ancestral beings emerged and shaped the land, giving form to its rivers, mountains, plants, animals, and people. These beings imbued every rock, tree, and river with a spirit, making the land alive with meaning. The Dreamtime is not just history but a living force that guides Aboriginal Australians in their day-to-day life, connecting them with their ancestors and the natural world. "Aboriginal spirituality is defined as at the core of Aboriginal being, their very identity. It gives meaning to all aspects of life including relationships with one another and the environment. All objects are living and share the same soul and spirit as Aboriginals. There is a kinship with the environment. Aboriginal spirituality can be expressed visually, musically and ceremonially." (Grant, 2004) Enjoy access to free resources Register now Australian Aboriginal religion and mythology are the beliefs representedin the stories performed by Aboriginal Australians within each of thelanguage groupsacross Australia in their ceremonies. Aboriginal spirituality includes Dreamtime(the Dreaming),songlines, and Aboriginaloral literature.Aboriginal spirituality often conveys descriptions of each groups localcultural landscape, adding meaning to the whole countrys topographyfromoral historytold by ancestors from some of the earliest recorded history. Most spirituality belongs to specific groups, while others span the whole continent in one form or another.Ayers Rock Northern Territory, AustraliaAntiquityAn Australianlinguist,R. M. W. Dixon, recording Aboriginal myths in their original languages, encountered coincidences between some of the landscape details being told about within various myths, andscientificdiscoveries being made about the same landscapes. In the case of theAtherton Tableland, myths tell of the origins ofLake Eacham,Lake Barrine, andLake Euramoo. Geological research dated the formative volcanic explosions described by Aboriginal myth tellers as having occurred more than 10,000 years ago.Pollen fossilsampling from the silt which had settled to the bottom of the craters confirmed the Aboriginal myth-tellers story. When the craters were formed,eucalyptusforests dominated rather than the current wettropical rainforests.Dixon observed from the evidence available that Aboriginal myths regarding the origin of the Crater Lakes might be dated as accurate back to 10,000 years ago.Further investigation of the material by the Australian Heritage Commission led to the Crater Lakes myth being listed nationally on theRegister of the National Estate,and included within AustraliasWorld Heritagenomination of thewet tropical forests, as an unparalleled human record of events dating back to thePleistoceneera.Since then, Dixon has assembled a number of similar examples of Australian Aboriginal myths that accurately describe landscapes of an ancient past. He particularly noted the numerous myths telling of previous sea levels, including:thePort Phillipmyth (recorded as told to Robert Russell in 1850), describing Port Phillip Bay as once dry land, and the course of theYarra Riverbeing once different, following what was then Carrum Carrum swamp.theGreat Barrier Reefcoastline myth (told to Dixon) inYarrabah, just south ofCairns, telling of a past coastline (since flooded) which stood at the edge of the current Great Barrier Reef, and naming places now completely submerged after the forest types and trees that once grew there.theLake Eyremyths (recorded by J. W. Gregory in 1906), telling of the deserts ofCentral Australiaas once having been fertile, well-watered plains, and the deserts around present Lake Eyre having been one continuous garden. This oral story matches geologists understanding that there was a wet phase to the earlyHolocenewhen the lake would have had permanent water.Other volcanic eruptions in Australia may also be recorded in Aboriginal myths, including Mount Gambier in South Australia, and Kinrara in northern Queensland.The Djabugay language groups mythical being, Damarri, transformed into a mountain range, is seen lying on his back above the Barron River Gorge, looking upwards to the skies, within north-east Australias wet tropical forested landscape.Aboriginal mythology: whole of AustraliaSee also: Ancestor WorshipThe stories enshrined in Aboriginal mythology variously tell significant truths within each Aboriginal groups local landscape. They effectively layer the whole of the Australian continents topography with cultural nuance and deeper meaning, and empower selected audiences with the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of Australian Aboriginal ancestors back to time immemorial.David HortonsEncyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australiacontains an article on Aboriginal mythology observing:A mythic map of Australia would show thousands of characters, varying in their importance, but all in some way connected with the land. Some emerged at their specific sites and stayed spiritually in that vicinity. Others came from somewhere else and went somewhere else. Many were shape changing, transformed from or into human beings or natural species, or into natural features such as rocks but all left something of their spiritual essence at the places noted in their stories.Australian Aboriginal mythologies have been characterised as at one and the same time fragments of acatechism, aliturgicalmanual, a history ofcivilization, ageographytextbook, and to a much smaller extent a manual ofcosmography.Diversity across a continentThere are 900 distinct Aboriginal groups across Australia, each distinguished by unique names usually identifying particular languages, dialects, or distinctive speech mannerisms. Each language was used for original myths, from which the distinctive words and names of individual myths derive.With so many distinct Aboriginal groups, languages, beliefs and practices, scholars cannot attempt to characterise, under a single heading, the full range and diversity of all myths being variously and continuously told, developed, elaborated, performed, and experienced by group members across the entire continent. Attempts to represent the different groupings in maps have varied widely.The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australianevertheless observes:One intriguing feature [of Aboriginal Australian mythology] is the mixture of diversity and similarity in myths across the entire continent.Public education about Aboriginal perspectivesTheCouncil for Aboriginal Reconciliations booklet,Understanding Country, formally seeks to introduce non-indigenous Australians to Aboriginal perspectives on the environment. It makes the following generalisation about Aboriginal myths and mythology:they generally describe the journeys of ancestral beings, often giant animals or people, over what began as a featureless domain. Mountains, rivers, waterholes, animal and plant species, and other natural and cultural resources came into being as a result of events which took place during these Dreamtime journeys. Their existence in present-day landscapes is seen by many indigenous peoples as confirmation of their creation beliefsThe routes taken by the Creator Beings in their Dreamtime journeys across land and sea link manysacred sitestogether in a web of Dreamtime tracks criss-crossing the country. Dreaming tracks can run for hundreds, even thousands of kilometres, from desert to the coast [and] may be shared by peoples in countries through which the tracks passAn anthropological generalisationAustraliananthropologistswilling to generalise suggest Aboriginal myths still being performed across Australia by Aboriginal peoples serve an importantsocial functionamongst their intended audiences: justifying the received ordering of their daily lives;helping shape peoples ideas; and assisting to influence others behaviour.In addition, such performance often continuously incorporates and mythologises historical events in the service of these social purposes in an otherwise rapidly changingmodern world.It is always integral and common that the Law (Aboriginal law) is something derived from ancestral peoples or Dreamings and is passed down the generations in a continuous line. While entitlements of particular human beings may come and go, the underlying relationships between foundational Dreamings and certain landscapes are theoretically eternal the entitlements of people to places are usually regarded strongest when those people enjoy a relationship of identity with one or more Dreamings of that place. This is an identity of spirit, aconsubstantiality, rather than a matter of mere belief: the Dreaming pre-exists and persists, while its human incarnations are temporary.An Aboriginal generalisationAboriginal specialists willing to generalise believe all Aboriginal myths across Australia, in combination, represent a kind of unwritten (oral) library within which Aboriginal peoples learn about the world and perceive a peculiarly Aboriginal reality dictated by concepts and values vastly different from those ofwestern societies:Aboriginal people learned from their stories that a society must not be human-centred but rather land centred, otherwise they forget their source and purpose humans are prone to exploitative behaviour if not constantly reminded they are interconnected with the rest of creation, that they as individuals are only temporal in time, and past and future generations must be included in their perception of their purpose in life.People come and go but the Land, and stories about the Land, stay. This is a wisdom that takes lifetimes of listening, observing and experiencing There is a deep understanding of human nature and the environment sites hold feelings which cannot be described in physical terms subtle feelings that resonate through the bodies of these people It is only when talking and being with these people that these feelings can truly be appreciated. This is the intangible reality of these peopleSacred sitesMain article:Australian Aboriginal sacred sitesAboriginal people observe some places as sacred, owing to their central place in the mythology of the local people.Pan-Australian mythologyRainbow SerpentMain article:Rainbow SerpentAustralian carpet python, one of the forms the Rainbow Serpent character may take in Rainbow Serpent mythsIn 1926 a British anthropologist specialising in Australian Aboriginal ethnology and ethnography, Professor Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, noted many Aboriginal groups widely distributed across the Australian continent all appeared to share variations of a single (common) myth telling of an unusually powerful, often creative, often dangerous snake or serpent of sometimes enormous size closely associated with the rainbows, rain, rivers, and deep waterholes.Radcliffe-Brown coined the term Rainbow Serpent to describe what he identified to be a common, recurring myth. Working in the field in various places on the Australian continent, he noted the key character of this myth (the Rainbow Serpent) is variously named:Kanmare (Boulia, Queensland);Tulloun: (Mount Isa);Andrenjinyi(Pennefather River, Queensland), Takkan (Maryborough, Queensland);Targan(Brisbane, Queensland);Kurreah(Broken Hill, New South Wales);Wawi(Riverina, New South Wales),Neitee & Yeutta(Wilcannia, New South Wales),Myndie(Melbourne, Victoria);Bunyip(WesternVictoria);Arkaroo(Flinders Ranges, South Australia);Wogal(Perth, Western Australia);Wanamangura(Laverton, Western Australia);Kajura(Carnarvon, Western Australia);Numereji(Kakadu, Northern Territory).This Rainbow Serpent is generally and variously identified by those who tell Rainbow Serpent myths, as a snake of some enormous size often living within the deepest waterholes of many of Australias waterways; descended from that larger being visible as a dark streak in the Milky Way, it reveals itself to people in this world as a rainbow as it moves through water and rain, shaping landscapes, naming and singing of places, swallowing and sometimes drowning people; strengthening the knowledgeable with rainmaking and healing powers; blighting others with sores, weakness, illness, and death.Even Australias Bunyip was identified as a Rainbow Serpent myth of the above kind.The term coined by Radcliffe-Brown is now commonly used and familiar to broader Australian and international audiences, as it is increasingly used by government agencies, museums, art galleries, Aboriginal organisations and the media to refer to the pan-Australian Aboriginal myth specifically, and as a shorthand allusion to Australian Aboriginal mythology generally.Captain CookSee also:James CookStatue of Captain James Cook at Admiralty Arch, LondonA number of linguists, anthropologists and others have formally documented another common Aboriginal myth occurring across Australia. Predecessors of the myth tellers encounter a mythical, exotic (most often English) character who arrives from the sea, bringing western colonialism, either offering gifts to the performers predecessors or bringing great harm upon the performers predecessors.This key mythical character is most often named Captain Cook, this being a mythical character shared with the broader Australian community, who also attribute James Cook with playing a key role in colonising Australia.The Aboriginal Captain Cook is attributed with bringing British rule to Australia,but his arrival is not celebrated. More often within the Aboriginal telling, he proves to be avillain.The many Aboriginal versions of this Captain Cook are rarely oral recollections of encounters with theLieutenantJames Cookwho first navigated and mapped Australias east coast onHM BarkEndeavourin 1770.Guugu Yimidhirrpredecessors, along theEndeavour River, did encounter James Cook during a 7-week period beached at the site of the present town ofCooktownwhile theEndeavour was being repaired.From this time the Guugu Yimidhirr did receive present-day names for places occurring in their local landscape; and the Guugu Yimmidhir may recollect this encounter.The pan-Australian Captain Cook myth, however, tells of a generic, largely symbolic British character who arrives from across the oceans sometime after the Aboriginal world was formed and the original social order founded. This Captain Cook is a harbinger of dramatic transformations in the social order, bringing change and a different social order, into which present-day audiences have been born.(seeaboveregarding this social function played by Aboriginal myths)In 1988 Australian anthropologist Kenneth Maddock assembled several versions of this Captain Cook myth as recorded from a number of Aboriginal groups around Australia.Included in his assemblage are:Batemans Bay, New South Wales: Percy Mumbulla told of Captain Cooks arriving on a large ship which anchored atSnapper Island, from which he disembarked to give the myth-tellers predecessors clothes (to wear) and hard biscuits (to eat). Then he returned to his ship and sailed away. Mumbulla told how his predecessors rejected Captain Cooks gifts, throwing them into the sea.Cardwell, Queensland:Chloe Grant and Rosie Runaway told of how Captain Cook and his group seemed to stand up out of the sea with the white skin of ancestral spirits, returning to their descendants. Captain Cook arrived first offering a pipe andtobaccoto smoke (which was dismissed as a burning thing stuck in his mouth), then boiling a billy oftea(which was dismissed asscaldingdirty water), next bakingflouron the coals (which was rejected as smelling stale and thrown away untasted), finally boilingbeef(which smelled well, and tasted okay, once the salty skin was wiped off). Captain Cook and group then left, sailing away to the north, leaving Chloe Grant and Rosie Runaways predecessors beating the ground with their fists, fearfully sorry to see the spirits of their ancestors depart in this way.South-eastern side of theGulf of Carpentaria,Queensland: Rolly Gilbert told of how Captain Cook and others sailed the oceans in a boat, and decided to come to see Australia. There he encountered a couple of Rollys predecessors whom he first intended to shoot, but instead tricked them into revealing the local populations main camping area, after which they:set up the people [cattle industry] to go down the countryside and shoot people down, just like animal, they left them lying there for the hawks and crows So a lot of old people and young people were struck by the head with the end of a gun and left there. They wanted to get the people wiped out because Europeans in Queensland had to run their stock: horses and cattle.Victoria River: it is told in a Captain Cooksagathat Captain Cook sailed from London toSydneyto acquire land. Admiring the country, he landedbullocksand men withfirearms, following which local Aboriginal peoples in the Sydney area weremassacred. Captain Cook made his way toDarwin, where he sent armed horsemen to hunt down the Aborigines in the Victoria River country, founding the city of Darwin and giving police plus cattle station managers orders on how to treat Aborigines.Kimberley: Numerous Aboriginal myth-tellers say that Captain Cook is a European culture hero who landed in Australia. Using gunpowder, he set a precedent for the treatment of Aboriginal peoples throughout Australia, including the Kimberley. On returning to his home, he claimed he had not seen any Aboriginal peoples, and advised that the country was a vast and empty land which settlers could come and claim for themselves. In this myth, Captain Cook introduced Cooks Law, upon which the settlers rely. The Aboriginal people note, however, that this is a recent, unjust and false law compared to Aboriginal law.Views on deathDeath in Aboriginal religion in some aspects may seem like it has some Western traditions in regard to having a ceremony and mourning the loss of the person that is deceased. However, that is really the only thing that this religion has in common with Western religion as far as death is concerned. For Aboriginal people when a person dies some form of the persons spirit and also their bones go back to the country they were born in. Aborigine people [sic] believe that they share their being with their country and all that is within it. So when a person dies their country suffers, trees die and become scarred because it is believed that came into being because of the deceased person.When an Aboriginal person dies the families have death ceremonies called the Sorry Business. During this time the entire community and family mourns the loss of the person for days. They are expected to cry together and share grief as a community. If someone was out of town and arrives after they have had a ceremony for the deceased, the entire community stops what they are doing and goes and tells them and mourns with them. The family of the deceased all stay in one room and mourn for their loved one.Naming a person after they have died is not allowed in the Aborigine religion. To say someones name after they die would be to disturb their spirit .Photos of the deceased are not allowed for fear of disturbing the spirit also. Many Aboriginal families will not have any photographs of their loved ones after they die. Asmoking ceremonyis also conducted when someone dies. The community uses smoke on the belongings and also the residence of the deceased to help release the spirit. Identifying the cause of death is determined by elders who hold the cultural authority to do so, and the causes in question are usually of a spiritual nature. The ceremonies are likened to an autopsy of Western practice.Ceremonies and mourning periods last days, weeks and even sometimes months depending upon the social status of the deceased person. It is culturally inappropriate for a non-Aboriginal person to contact and inform the next of kin of a persons passing.When someone passes away, the family of the deceased move out of their house and another family then moves in. Some families will move to sorry camps which are usually further away.Mourning includes the recital of symbolic chants, the singing of songs, dance, body paint, and cuts on the bodies of the mourners. The body is placed on a raised platform for several months, covered in native plants. Sometimes a cave or a tree is used instead. When nothing but bones are left, family and friends will scatter them in a variety of ways. They sometimes wrap the bones in a hand-knitted fabric and place them in a cave for eventual disintegration or place them in a naturally hollowed out log.Many Aboriginal people believe in a place called the Land of the Dead. This place was also commonly known as the sky-world, which is really just the sky. As long as certain rituals were carried out during their life and at the time of their death, the deceased is allowed to enter The Land of the Dead in the Sky World. The spirit of the dead is also a part of different lands and sites and then those areas becomesacred sites. This explains why the Aboriginal people are very protective of sites they call sacred.The rituals that are performed enable an Aboriginal person to return to the womb of all time, which is Dreamtime. It allows the spirit to be connected once more to all nature, to all their ancestors, and to their own personal meaning and place within the scheme of things. The Dreamtime is a return to the real existence for the aborigine. Life in time is simply a passing phase a gap in eternity. It has a beginning and it has an end. The experience of Dreamtime, whether through ritual or from dreams, flowed through into the life in time in practical ways. The individual who enters the Dreamtime feels no separation between themselves and their ancestors. The strengths and resources of the timeless enter into what is needed in the life of the present. The future is less uncertain because the individual feels their life as a continuum linking past and future in unbroken connection. Through Dreamtime the limitations of time and space are overcome.For the Aboriginal people, dead relatives are very much a part of continuing life. It is believed that in dreams dead relatives communicate their presence. At times they may bring healing if the dreamer is in pain. Death is seen as part of a cycle of life in which one emerges from Dreamtime through birth, and eventually returns to the timeless, only to emerge again. It is also a common belief that a person leaves their body during sleep, and temporarily enters the Dreamtime.Group-specific mythologyYolnguFurther information:Yolngu Yolu culture, law and mythologyMurrinh-Patha peopleThe Murrinh-Patha people (whose country is the saltwater country immediately inland from the town of Wadeye) describe aDreamtimein their myths which anthropologists believe is a religious belief equivalent to, though wholly different from, most of the worlds other significant religious beliefs.In particular, scholars suggest the Murrinh-Patha have a oneness of thought, belief, and expression unequalled within Christianity, as they see all aspects of their lives, thoughts and culture as under the continuing influence of their Dreaming. Within this Aboriginal religion, no distinction is drawn between things spiritual/ideal/mental and things material; nor is any distinction drawn between things sacred and things profane: rather all life is sacred, all conduct has moral implication, and all lifes meaning arises out of this eternal, everpresent Dreaming.In fact, the isomorphic fit between the natural and supernatural means that all nature is coded and charged by the sacred, while the sacred is everywhere within the physical landscape. Myths and mythic tracks cross over.. thousands of miles, and every particular form and feature of the terrain has a well-developed story behind it.Animating and sustaining this Murrinh-patha mythology is an underlying philosophy of life that has been characterised byStanneras a belief that life is a joyous thing withmaggotsat its centre. Life is good and benevolent, but throughout lifes journey, there are numerous painful sufferings that each individual must come to understand and endure as he grows. This is the underlying message repeatedly being told within the Murrinh-patha myths. It is this philosophy that gives Murrinh-patha people motive and meaning in life.The following Murrinh-patha myth, for instance, is performed in Murrinh-patha ceremonies to initiate young men into adulthood.A woman,Mutjinga (the Old Woman), was in charge of young children, but instead of watching out for them during their parents absence, she swallowed them and tried to escape as a giant snake. The people followed her, spearing her and removing the undigested children from the body.Within the myth and in its performance, young, unadorned children must first be swallowed by an ancestral being (who transforms into a giant snake), then regurgitated before being accepted as young adults with all the rights and privileges of young adults.Pintupi peopleScholars of the Pintupi peoples (from within Australias Gibson Desert region) believe they have a predominantly mythic form of consciousness,within which events occur and are explained by the preordained social structures and orders told of, sung about, and performed within their superhuman mythology, rather than by reference to the possible accumulated political actions, decisions and influences of local individuals (i.e. this understanding effectively erases history).The Dreaming.. provides amoral authoritylying outside the individual will and outside human creation.. although the Dreaming as an ordering of the cosmos is presumably a product of historical events, such an origin is denied.These human creations are objectified thrust out into principles or precedents for the immediate world.. Consequently, current action is not understood as the result of human alliances, creations, and choices, but is seen as imposed by an embracing, cosmic order.Within this Pintupiworld view, three long geographical tracks of named places dominate, being interrelated strings of significant places named and created by mythic characters on their routes through the Pintupi desert region during the Dreaming. It is a complex mythology of narratives, songs and ceremonies known to the Pintupi asTingarri. It is most completely told and performed by Pintupi peoples at larger gatherings within Pintupi country.Newer belief systemsChristianityThe presence ofChristianity in Australiabegan with the foundation of aBritish colonyatNew South Walesin 1788.Christianityremains the largestreligion in Australia, though declining religiosity and diversifying immigration intakes of recent decades have seen the percentage of the population identifying as Christian in thenational censusdecline from 96.1% at the time of theFederation of Australiain the1901 census, to 52.1% in the2016 census.Before European contact,indigenous peoplehad performed the rites and rituals of the animist religion of theDreamtime. Portuguese and Spanish Catholics and Dutch and English Protestants were sailing into Australian waters from the seventeenth century.Among the first Catholics known to have sighted Australia were the crew of a Spanish expedition of 16056. In 1606, the expeditions leader,Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, landed in theNew Hebridesand, believing it to be the fabled southern continent, he named the land:Austrialis del Espiritu Santo (Southern Land of the Holy Spirit).Later that year, his deputyLus Vaz de Torressailed through AustraliasTorres Strait.The English navigatorJames Cooks favourable account of the fertile east coast of Australia in 1770 ultimately ensured that Australias Christian foundations were to reflect the British denominations (with their Protestant majority and largely Irish, Catholic minority).The permanent presence of Christianity in Australia began with the arrival of theFirst Fleetof British convict ships at Sydney in 1788.The ReverendRichard Johnsonof theChurch of Englandwas licensed as chaplain to the Fleet and the settlement. In early Colonial times, Church of England clergy worked closely with thegovernors. Johnson was charged by the governor,Arthur Phillip, with improving public morality in the colony, but he was also heavily involved in health and education.In the 1991 census, almost 74 percent of Aboriginal respondents identified with Christianity, up from 67 percent in the 1986 census. The wording of the question changed for the 1991 census; as the religion question is optional, the number of respondents reduced. The 1996 census reported that almost 72 percent of Aboriginal people practised some form of Christianity, and that 16 percent listed no religion. The 2001 census contained no comparable updated data.IslamSee also:Islam in AustraliaThe Aboriginal population also includes a small but growing number of Muslims.This Islamic community has seen high-profile members such as the boxer,Anthony Mundine.Islam in Australiais aminorityreligious affiliation. According to the 2016Australian Census, the combined number of people whoself-identifiedasMusliminAustralia, from all forms ofIslam, constituted 604,200 people, or 2.6% of the total Australian population, an increase of over 15% of its previous population share of 2.2% reported in the previous census 5 years earlier. Of that earlier 2.2% figure,some estimate more than half are non-practicingcultural Muslimsstemming from all the varying denominations and sects of Islam present in Australia.See also Adapted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia Aboriginal people are very religious and spiritual, but rather than praying to a single god they cannot see, each group generally believes in a number of different deities, whose image is often depicted in some tangible, recognisable form. Takedown request | View complete answer on aboriginalculture.com.au What is the Aboriginal religion called? Dreamtime is the foundation of Aboriginal religion and culture. It dates back some 65,000 years. Takedown request | View complete answer on aboriginal-art-australia.com What religion do most Aboriginals follow? Through systems of totemic belief, individuals and groups are linked in many different ways to both the things of nature and the all-powerful beings of the spiritual realm. Totemic beliefs are more highly elaborated among Aboriginal people than among any other people. Takedown request | View complete answer on britannica.com What god did the Aboriginals believe in? In Australian Aboriginal mythology, Baiame (or Biame, Baayami, Baayama or Byamee) was the creator god and sky father in the Dreaming of several Aboriginal Australian peoples of south-eastern Australia, such as the Wonnarua, Kamilaroi, Guringay, Eora, Darkinjung, and Wiradjuri peoples. Takedown request | View complete answer on en.wikipedia.org What gods do Aboriginals worship? Who are the Australian Gods?Altjira. In Australian mythology, Altjira is one of the ancient beings who created the world during the Dreamtime and is specifically the father of the Aranda, a central Australian tribe. ... Julunggul. ... Marmoo. ... Eingana. ... Yhi. Takedown request | View complete answer on study.com 37 related questions found Dreaming. A western term used to describe the Aboriginal Spirituality system. The dreaming. encompasses all the cultural values, laws and knowledge which is passed down through song, dance painting and storytelling to each generation. Each language group has their own term to describe their belief system. Takedown request | View complete answer on csnsw.catholic.edu.au To the Anishinaabe, Mother Earth is both the physical manifestation and embodiment of creation, and the Great Spirit Manitou who created it. Walking in harmony with the world is extremely important to the Anishinaabe culture and explains, in part, why there are so many Aboriginal people in constant distress these days. Takedown request | View complete answer on anishinabeknews.ca Koori culture is characterised by a commitment to the Dreaming, an overall worldview that believes in and values interconnectedness between the land and community. Koori art and literature continue to be produced in contemporary Australia, often with reference to traditional Indigenous artistic techniques. Takedown request | View complete answer on en.wikipedia.org The Dreaming is used to represent Aboriginal concepts of Everywhen, during which the land was inhabited by ancestral figures, often of heroic proportions or with supernatural abilities. These figures were often distinct from gods, as they did not control the material world and were not worshipped but only revered. Takedown request | View complete answer on en.wikipedia.org Many traditional aboriginal cultures consider death to be very natural. For many aboriginal people, a good death is one where they meet death with dignity and composure. Dying this way implies a further experience of an afterlife. Takedown request | View complete answer on ncbi.nlm.nih.gov "Aboriginal spirituality is defined as at the core of Aboriginal being, their very identity. It gives meaning to all aspects of life including relationships with one another and the environment. All objects are living and share the same soul and spirit as Aboriginals. There is a kinship with the environment. Takedown request | View complete answer on australianstogether.org.au Christianity has influenced Aboriginal spirituality in many ways, and many Aboriginal people are Christians. Aboriginal and Christian spirituality can sometimes peacefully coexist in the same person's belief system, and churches open up to this change. Takedown request | View complete answer on creativespirits.info You can find Aboriginal Muslims all over the country. Most live in urban areas and attend mosques alongside Muslims from other cultural backgrounds. Some of them are cultural Muslims. They identify with the cultural practices and some beliefs found in Islam, but they don't go to the mosque. Takedown request | View complete answer on crescentwealth.com.au Sacred sites are places within the landscape that have a special meaning or significance under Aboriginal tradition. Hills, rocks, waterholes, trees, plains, lakes, billabongs and other natural features can be sacred sites. Takedown request | View complete answer on aapant.org.au Aboriginal language people terms such as 'Koori', 'Murri', 'Nyoongah' are appropriate for the areas where they apply. About 80% of the Torres Strait Island population now resides outside the Torres Strait and as such, local terminology such as Murray Island Peoples and Mer Island Peoples is also used. Takedown request | View complete answer on ipswich.qld.gov.au Koori (or Koorie) Koori is a term denoting an Aboriginal person of southern New South Wales or Victoria. 'Koori' is not a synonym for 'Aboriginal'. There are many other Aboriginal groups across Australia (such as Murri, Noongar, Yolngu) with which Indigenous Australians may identify themselves. Takedown request | View complete answer on indigenousteaching.com An Aboriginal person's soul or spirit is believed to "continue on after our physical form has passed through death", explains Eddie Kneebone. After the death of an Aboriginal person their spirit returns to the Dreamtime from where it will return through birth as a human, an animal, a plant or a rock. Takedown request | View complete answer on creativespirits.info