

Introduction to Buddhism: Theravada and Mahayana

Religious Studies · Practice Test · 23 Questions

1. Who was Siddhartha Gautama before he became known as the Buddha?

- A) A farmer
- B) A prince
- C) A merchant
- D) A monk

2. What does the title "Buddha" mean?

- A) The Awakened One
- B) The Enlightened One
- C) The Compassionate One
- D) The Wise One

3. Which of the following is NOT one of the Four Noble Truths?

- A) Life involves suffering.
- B) Suffering is caused by craving and attachment.
- C) Suffering can be permanent.
- D) There is a path leading to the end of suffering.

4. What does "Dukkha" refer to in Buddhism?

- A) Happiness and joy
- B) The pursuit of wealth
- C) Inherent dissatisfaction in life
- D) Eternal bliss

5. The Eightfold Path provides guidance for overcoming what?

- A) Wealth
- B) Suffering
- C) Ignorance
- D) Attachment

6. Which of the following is NOT part of the Eightfold Path?

- A) Right understanding
- B) Right livelihood
- C) Right pleasure
- D) Right mindfulness

7. What is Nirvana?

- A) A heavenly realm
- B) The beginning of a new life
- C) The complete cessation of suffering
- D) A state of eternal youth

8. What does "Anicca" teach about conditioned things?

- A) They are permanent
- B) They are unchanging
- C) They are impermanent
- D) They are illusory

9. Which Buddhist tradition focuses on the Arhat ideal?

- A) Mahayana
- B) Theravada
- C) Vajrayana
- D) Zen

10. What is the ideal emphasized in Mahayana Buddhism?

- A) The Arhat ideal
- B) The Bodhisattva ideal
- C) The Samsara ideal
- D) The Karma ideal

11. How does Mahayana Buddhism differ from Theravada Buddhism regarding enlightenment?

- A) Mahayana practitioners seek enlightenment faster.
- B) Mahayana emphasizes postponing enlightenment to help others.
- C) Theravada practitioners help others achieve enlightenment.
- D) There is no difference in their approach to enlightenment.

12. What does Buddhism teach about a permanent soul, unlike Hinduism?

- A) It teaches there is a permanent soul.
- B) It teaches there is no permanent soul.
- C) It is undecided on the existence of a permanent soul.
- D) It believes the soul is reincarnated infinitely.

13. According to Buddhism, what shapes rebirth?

- A) Destiny
- B) Divine intervention
- C) A continuing stream of consciousness shaped by karma
- D) Good deeds alone

14. What is the ultimate spiritual state where the cycle of rebirth ends called?

- A) Samsara
- B) Dukkha
- C) Nirvana
- D) Anicca

15. Which practice is central to attaining enlightenment for Siddhartha Gautama?

- A) Warfare
- B) Meditation
- C) Trade
- D) Politics

16. The realization that worldly pleasures are temporary is part of which Buddhist concept?

- A) Nirvana
- B) Dukkha
- C) Karma
- D) Eightfold Path

17. Ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom are promoted by the practices of the:

- A) Four Noble Truths
- B) Eightfold Path
- C) Theravada Tradition
- D) Mahayana Tradition

18. What is extinguished in Nirvana?

- A) Joy and happiness
- B) Craving and ignorance
- C) The cycle of life
- D) Meditation

19. Attachment to temporary things leads to what, according to Buddhism?

- A) Enlightenment
- B) Nirvana
- C) Suffering
- D) Liberation

20. In Theravada Buddhism, what is the goal of the practitioner?

- A) To help others achieve liberation
- B) Personal enlightenment through discipline and meditation
- C) To attain worldly pleasures
- D) To escape the cycle of rebirth immediately

21. A Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism is one who:

- A) Achieves final enlightenment immediately
- B) Postpones final enlightenment to help others
- C) Focuses solely on personal spiritual growth
- D) Renounces all worldly possessions

22. What is the Buddhist understanding of rebirth without a permanent soul?

- A) It's a myth
- B) It's a continuous stream of consciousness shaped by karma
- C) It's determined by fate
- D) It's a choice made by the individual

23. The concept of "The Enlightened One" refers to whom?

- A) Siddhartha Gautama
- B) A Bodhisattva
- C) An Arhat
- D) A spiritual leader