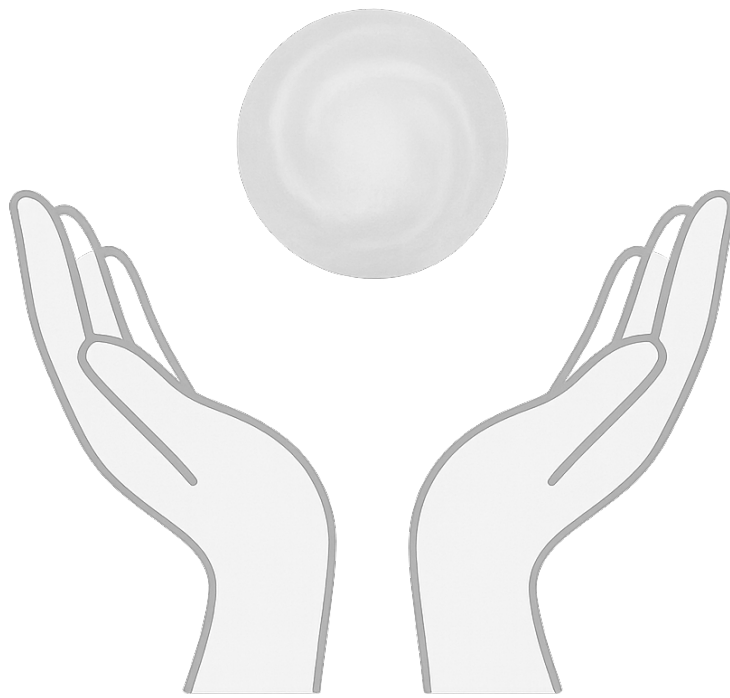


# Healing Practices in the Main World Religions & Reiki



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## I. Introduction

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With a renewed interest in healing and wellbeing, I sought to explore the possibilities available to someone like me who wanted to help others through healing practices. As a practising Catholic, I was familiar with the charismatic movement, and being educated in an international environment, I was also aware of other healing traditions. This motivated me to dive deeper into the available options.

After researching the various options, I decided that learning reiki would be a good starting point. But reiki is a generalist word used by different methodologies, so I further explored reiki, reading some books to ensure I chose the technique that did not conflict with religious beliefs and the best-fit learning centre.

Feeling happy and confident with my decision, I was surprised by some of the reactions and comments I received and the worries and concerns expressed by others. Taking these concerns seriously, I decided to deepen my understanding of the healing traditions and the energy source behind the healing.

After this deeper exploration, my conclusion was even more convincing, so writing a paper to explain my findings would be a good way to share my understanding with those with concerns.

Usui Reiki (reiki going forward) is an energy healing practice developed in Japan in the 1920s by Mikao Usui. It involves the transfer of energy through a practitioner to promote physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Reiki is a method that does not seek to indoctrinate its practitioners into any belief system. Instead, it teaches and explains what needs to be done to practice the healing. This practice shares similarities with various healing traditions found in many religions.

This paper analyses the similarities among the healing traditions within the five major world religions. Those curious about the source of this energy may find that despite some differences, the energy used for healing must come from the same source. Understanding these similarities and techniques expands the knowledge of other practices, broadening their understanding.

It is challenging to think that there are many different sources of higher energy around us; we must all be accessing the same higher divine energy, though we have arrived at it from other paths (though in similar ways). I am referring to positive, good energy. None of the described possibilities consider anything that is not good, positive, and for the greater good.

Hands are used to channel healing energy, but they are not the only way to effect healing. The connection to the divine energy, with the practitioner as a vessel for the healing, can occur through physical touch or distance, even with differences in time. The commonality lies in the spirituality of the practitioner, the ability to connect with divine energy, and the ability to intercede to make the healing happen. There are more commonalities than differences.

Other traditions, such as Taoism and indigenous and shamanic traditions, can also be similar, but for this paper, we will focus on the five main religions.

I aim to be as respectful as possible since, in most cases, we are discussing religious faiths. I apologise in advance if there is any discomfort or unintended offence.

## II. Source

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All spiritual and healing traditions have their names for the concept of healing energy. Not intending to undermine any religious beliefs, the idea of these lines is to analyse that they are all rooted in the higher divine energy or God; they are different names or terms for the same thing.

### 1. Judaism

- **Nefesh:** In Hebrew, this term refers to the soul or life force. Jewish mysticism, such as Kabbalah, also refers to divine energy.

### Christianity

- **Holy Spirit:** In Christianity, the Holy Spirit is the source of divine healing and God's life-giving power. The laying on of hands, prayer, and commands are seen as ways to transmit the Holy Spirit's healing power.

### 3. Islam

- **Ruh:** In Islam, Ruh refers to the soul or spirit, which is believed to be the breath of life Allah gave. Healing practices often involve prayer and seeking Allah's intervention to restore health.

### 4. Buddhism

- **Qi (or Chi):** While Qi is more commonly associated with Chinese culture and practices like Tai Chi and Qi Gong, it is also relevant in Buddhist traditions, especially those integrated with Chinese practices.
- **Lung:** In Tibetan Buddhism, the term Lung (or Rlung) refers to wind or breath energy, which is considered a vital life force.

### 5. Hinduism

- **Prana:** The vital life force that flows through all living beings. Prana is fundamental in yoga, pranayama (breathing exercises), and Ayurvedic medicine.

### 6. Reiki

- **Reiki:** The Japanese term for divine energy, the non-physical ubiquitous energy that gives life to all living things. It does not provide a specific name and accepts the same energy with different names depending on the tradition's origin (Nefesh, Ruh, Holy Spirit, Ki, Chi, Prana).

### III. Meditation

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Meditation is deeply rooted within all religions across cultures and spiritual practices. It plays a significant role in the preparation and development of healing abilities. It cultivates inner peace, spiritual alignment, and heightened sensitivity to energy flows, essential for effective healing practices.

#### 1. Judaism:

Meditation deepens spiritual connection in Judaism, fosters ethical introspection, and aligns with divine healing energies. Whether through solitary contemplation, mystical practices, mindfulness, or focused prayer, Jewish meditation prepares healers to approach healing as a sacred and intentional practice rooted in faith, compassion, and divine guidance. It enhances their ability to channel healing energies and support spiritual and physical wellbeing in others within Jewish spiritual teachings and traditions.

#### 2. Christianity:

Christian meditation or contemplative prayer involves silent reflection on the Scriptures or divine presence. It facilitates emotional healing and spiritual renewal and deepens connection with God's healing grace. Those in the healing ministry engage in contemplative prayer and meditation to deepen their relationship with God and receive guidance for healing. Meditation helps address emotional and spiritual wounds, fostering empathy and compassion for those seeking healing. Before ministering to others, practitioners meditate to discern the spiritual needs of individuals and seek divine guidance.

#### 3. Islam:

Islamic healers engage in dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and meditation to connect with divine healing energy (Ruh), access its blessings (Barakah), and seek spiritual guidance. They may meditate on Quranic verses about healing and mercy, seeking blessings for themselves and those they treat. Before performing ruqyah (spiritual healing through Quranic recitation), practitioners meditate to purify their intentions and focus on Allah's healing power.

#### 4. Buddhism:

Satipatthana and Vipassana are Buddhist meditation practices that enhance emotional regulation and cognitive function. To foster self-awareness and healing, mindfulness is cultivated to develop deep presence and compassion, essential for healing. Meditation techniques visualise healing light or chant healing mantras to benefit others. Meditation helps practitioners align with Bodhisattva vows to alleviate suffering and promote wellbeing in others.

#### 5. Hinduism:

Meditation is also essential for Ayurvedic and yoga practitioners to achieve mental clarity, focus, and spiritual grounding. They often practice meditation (Dhyana) and pranayama (breath control) to balance their energy and cultivate healing energy. Before treating patients, they meditate to attune themselves to the patient's energy and intentions, fostering compassion and healing.

#### 6. Reiki:

Meditation is essential in reiki practice to enable connection to the energy source and visualise healing for spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing. Reiki practitioners meditate to centre themselves, clear their energy channels, and connect with universal energy. They may use meditation to visualise and discern the healing needs of the recipient and channel healing energy effectively. Regular meditation helps energy healers maintain their energetic balance. Meditation can be done under religious traditions or as an agnostic.

## IV. Prayer and Intercession

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Prayer and intercession also play a vital role in the healing practice. It involves seeking divine intervention and support for oneself and others. With some key similarities across traditions:

- **Intentionality:** The intention behind the prayer is crucial. It must be sincere and heartfelt.
- **Community:** Praying within a community is seen as more powerful and supportive.
- **Ritual Acts:** Acts such as fasting, charity, and specific postures or gestures (like bowing or prostrating) are often incorporated to show devotion and humility.

### 1. Judaism

#### Prayers:

**Tefillah:** Structured prayers, often recited from the Siddur (prayer book). Includes daily prayers: Shacharit, Minchah and Arvith

**Hitbodedut:** spontaneous prayer and meditation where individuals speak to God in their own words.

**Kavanah:** Intention and focus on prayer, ensuring it is heartfelt and sincere

#### Practices include:

**Communal Prayer:** Praying in a minyan (quorum of ten adults) is believed to amplify prayer's power.

**Charity (Tzedakah):** Acts of charity and good deeds are often performed alongside prayer to invoke divine mercy.

**Refuah Shleimah:** the prayer to ask for a fast and complete recovery. It includes spiritual healing, as it is considered that the soul governs physical health.

#### Intercession:

**Mi Sheberach:** A traditional Jewish prayer for healing. It is often recited in the synagogue on behalf of someone who is ill.

**Psalms:** Reciting Psalms, especially Psalm 121 or 130, is common for interceding on behalf of others.

### 2. Christianity

#### Prayers:

**Liturgical Prayer:** Structured prayers used in worship services, such as the Lord's Prayer.

**Personal Prayer:** Informal, individual conversations with God.

**Contemplative Prayer:** Silent, meditative prayer focusing on God's presence.

#### Practices include:

**Fasting:** Combined with prayer to seek God's intervention and show earnestness.

**Anointing with Oil:** Used in some denominations during prayer for healing, based on biblical practices

#### Intercession:

**Prayers of the Faithful:** Common in liturgical traditions, where the congregation prays for various needs.

**Prayer Chains:** Groups dedicated to praying for specific intentions or individuals.

**Healing Services:** Special services focused on praying for the sick, often involving laying on of hands.

### 3. Islam

#### Prayers:

**Salah:** The five daily prayers obligatory for Muslims are structured and include recitations from the Quran.

**Dua:** Personal supplications to God, which can be made at any time.

**Dhikr:** Remembrance of God through repeated recitations of divine names and phrases.

#### Practices include:

**Charity (Sadaqah):** Voluntary giving to those in need is often combined with prayer to seek God's blessings.

**Fasting:** Particularly during Ramadan, fasting is accompanied by increased prayer and supplication.

#### Intercession:

**Salat al-Istikhara:** A prayer for seeking guidance from God.

**Dua:** Supplications made after the prayer to intercede for oneself or others.

**Ruqyah:** Recitation of specific Quranic verses for healing and protection.

### 4. Buddhism

Prayer and intercession are integral to the spiritual practices of Buddhism and Hinduism. While intercession might differ from the concepts of monotheistic religions, both traditions emphasise prayer, meditation, and rituals as means of seeking divine help and fostering spiritual wellbeing.

#### Prayers:

**Puja:** devotional prayer, which involves offerings, chants, and prayers to honour the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and other enlightened beings.

**Mantras:** Repeated recitations of sacred syllables or phrases, such as "Om Mani Padme Hum," which is associated with the Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteshvara.

**Meditative Prayer:** Focuses on cultivating mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom through practices like metta (loving-kindness) meditation.

#### Practices include:

**Chanting and Recitation:** chanting of sutras and mantras, believed to have protective and purifying power.

**Meditation:** Practices such as vipassana (insight meditation) and metta bhavana (loving-kindness meditation) aim to develop compassion and understanding, indirectly benefiting others through the practitioner's inner transformation

#### Intercession:

**Bodhisattva Vows:** Practitioners, especially in Mahayana Buddhism, take vows to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. They pray and meditate not just for their benefit but for the liberation of others.

**Dedication of Merit:** After completing positive actions or meditative practices, they often dedicate the merit gained to the welfare of all beings, asking that their good deeds help alleviate the suffering of others.

**Healing Rituals:** Monks and lay practitioners may perform rituals and prayers for the sick, invoking the healing powers of the Medicine Buddha (Bhaisajyaguru).

## 5. Hinduism

### Prayers:

**Bhakti:** heartfelt devotional prayers to deities like Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi through hymns, prayers, and rituals.

**Mantras:** Sacred sounds or phrases, such as "Om" and "Gayatri Mantra," are recited to invoke divine presence and blessings.

**Yajnas:** Rituals involving fire offerings, where prayers are made to gods for various blessings, including health and prosperity.

### Practices include:

**Vratas (Fasting and Vows):** Devotional practices where individuals fast and pray for specific outcomes, often on behalf of others.

**Charitable Acts (Seva):** Acts of service and charity believed to generate positive karma and divine favour for the benefit of oneself and others.

**Meditation and Yoga:** Practices aimed at achieving spiritual enlightenment and mental clarity, often dedicated to the welfare of all beings

### Intercession:

**Puja:** Priests (purohits) perform pujas for individuals seeking divine intervention.

**Sankalpa:** A vow or intention set before performing a ritual, often including prayers for the wellbeing of others.

**Healing Mantras and Rituals:** Specific mantras and rituals are performed to invoke healing energies and divine protection. For example, the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is chanted for healing and longevity.

## 6. Reiki

Reiki, being a religion, does not involve itself in prayer. However, as we have seen, meditation is encouraged as a way to develop spirituality and enable the practitioner to be an intercessor for others. Additionally, it promotes a great awareness of one's energy and wellbeing.

### Practice:

The healing method requires meditation and connecting to the 'source' setting of the intention (intercession) for healing and the greater good.



## V. Laying of Hands within the Healing Practice

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We have now looked at meditation, the source of divine energy, as a preparation for the 'healer' to connect to it. Prayer and intercession can deliver healing. In addition to the aspects we have reviewed, the traditions also include using hands in healing in some way, even if not necessary in all cases.

### 1. Judaism

As we have seen, the healing practice's core focus is meditation and prayer, including intercessory prayer. While not as prominent as in other religious traditions, healing with hands in Judaism has its place within the broader spectrum of Jewish healing practices. This concept can be seen through various lenses:

- The concept of laying on of hands (semikhah) is seen in the Torah, primarily for ordination and blessing purposes (e.g., Moses laying hands on Joshua in Numbers 27:18-23). While not directly connected to healing, this act symbolises the transfer of divine power or blessing.
- Some rabbinical traditions include the practice of rabbis or spiritual leaders laying hands on individuals during blessings for health and wellbeing. They are the Sage, the anointed. When a person reaches the level of the Sage, the Talmud emphasises that he can even cancel God's decrees by means of his prayers.
- Practitioners of Kabbalah might use their hands to direct spiritual energy to heal physical ailments; this energy flows from the Divine through the healer. Hebrew letters and specific prayers are believed to have healing powers. Practitioners might use their hands in conjunction with these prayers to focus healing energies.
- Contemporary Jewish spiritual healers integrate hand-based techniques with traditional Jewish prayers and meditations framed within a Jewish spiritual context. Some Jewish communities hold healing services where the laying of hands may be incorporated as part of prayer and support for the sick. This is often done in a group setting, emphasising communal support and the power of collective prayer.

### 2. Christianity

The Christian healing tradition is multifaceted, including scriptural mandates, sacramental acts, and charismatic practices. Whether through the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, or faith healing, these practices reflect a deep reliance on the power of God to heal and a commitment to following the example set by Jesus and the apostles:

- The Holy Spirit flows through individuals to heal and perform miracles. During prayer services or healing ministries, Christians often lay hands on individuals while praying for their healing, invoking the Holy Spirit to bring about physical and spiritual healing.
- The concept of laying on hands for healing is prominent. In the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples performed healing through touch (e.g., Mark 16:18).
- Faith healing emphasises the belief that faith can bring about physical and spiritual healing, resonating with reiki's principle that belief and intention are crucial to the healing process.
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit – (1 Corinthians 12; 8-10) talks about the gifts of the holy spirit, healing being one of them. These are: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning between spirits, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.
- The laying on of hands is a significant sacramental act in various Christian traditions, particularly in the sacraments of healing, such as the Anointing of the Sick (in Catholicism) and certain ordination rites. During prayer services or healing ministries, Christians often lay hands on individuals while praying for their healing, invoking the Holy Spirit to bring about physical and spiritual healing.

- Many Protestant denominations engage in healing ministries, where trained ministers or lay people pray over the sick by laying on hands. The reading of scripture and communal prayer often accompanies this practice. Evangelical and Pentecostal circles emphasise faith healing, where the laying of hands is a central practice in healing services.

### 3. Islam

In Islam, healing practices involving the use of hands are deeply intertwined with faith, the recitation of Quranic verses, and adherence to prophetic traditions. While diverse, these practices share common themes of invoking God's power for healing, utilising Quranic verses, and following the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Below are some examples:

- Certain practices involve reciting Quranic verses and passing hands over a person's body for spiritual and physical healing.
- The practice of Ruqyah (spiritual healing) relies on faith in God's power to heal through recitation and prayer.
- The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have used a method where he would recite verses and then blow gently or spit lightly over the affected area. He often placed his right hand on the ill person and recited prayers for healing.

### 4. Buddhism:

Buddhism encompasses a variety of healing traditions that reflect its diverse cultural and philosophical contexts. These practices integrate physical, mental, and spiritual healing, emphasising the interconnectedness of body and mind.

Buddhist healing traditions consider a holistic approach to health, integrating meditation, mindfulness, rituals, herbal medicine, and compassionate action. These practices balance the body and mind, reduce suffering, and promote overall wellbeing. Through meditation, ritual, and service, Buddhism provides a comprehensive framework for healing that addresses physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions.

In Buddhism, hand-healing traditions are not as prominently emphasised as in other practices. Still, various forms of healing incorporate using hands. These practices are often intertwined with the broader principles of mindfulness, meditation, and the flow of spiritual energy (qi or prana).

- **Mudras** are symbolic hand gestures used in meditation, rituals, and healing. They are believed to channel and influence energy within the body. Specific mudras are specifically associated with healing. For example, the Varada Mudra, with the palm facing outward, symbolises compassion and granting wishes, including health and healing. Practitioners use these mudras during meditation or healing sessions to enhance energy flow and bring about physical and spiritual healing.
- They use **mantras** (sacred sounds) and visualisations for healing.
- Other forms of healing involve the transfer of spiritual energy and the use of mantras and visualisation techniques.

### 4. Hinduism:

In Hinduism, hand-healing traditions are part of a broader spectrum of spiritual and physical healing practices. These methods incorporate using hands in various ways to channel energy, perform rituals, and promote healing. From the precise techniques of Ayurvedic pulse diagnosis and marma therapy to the symbolic use of mudras and the energy-focused practices of pranic healing, these traditions emphasise the holistic nature of healing. Whether through ritual, meditation, yoga, or traditional methods, the hands play a crucial role in channelling divine energy, balancing the body's vital forces, and promoting overall wellbeing:

- Prana is the vital life force in Hindu philosophy. Practitioners use their hands to cleanse the aura (energy field) of negative energy and energise it with positive prana. Techniques include sweeping motions to remove blocked energy and energising movements to infuse prana.
- Kundalini Yoga involves awakening and channelling divine energy through the chakras.
- Mudras are symbolic hand gestures used in meditation, rituals, and healing. Each mudra is believed to channel and influence energy within the body. Mudras are often used during meditation or yoga to enhance the healing effects of these practices.

### **5. Reiki:**

The reiki healing method actively uses hands in the healing practice. However, it is not the only way to channel healing energy. It can also be done by visualisation, using the breath, or at a distance. But the most common method is with the use of hands, which may or may not touch the other person.

- The hands are used as conduits for divine energy, which flows through. By placing their hands lightly on or just above the client's body, reiki practitioners can transfer reiki energy to the recipient.
- Practitioners use specific hand positions to channel energy to different body parts. This can be done in a standard sequence or with more experienced practitioners who develop an intuitive sense of where healing is needed and adapt positions accordingly.
- Reiki practitioners are also trained in self-healing techniques, where they apply hand positions to their bodies to maintain their health and balance. Self-healing is essential to reiki practice, ensuring practitioners are in a positive state to help others.
- It is also possible to send reiki energy to individuals who are not physically present, as energy is not limited by physical distance and can be directed to anyone, anywhere.

### **Differences to Consider**

Despite these similarities, there are also differences rooted in each tradition's cultural, doctrinal, and ritualistic contexts. Reiki is non-religious and focuses on the universal/divine energy concept. In contrast, religious healing practices are deeply embedded in specific theological frameworks and rituals.

## VI. Compassion, Love, Charity and Gratitude

They are all integral to healing traditions across various religions. These values shape the healer's approach and create a supportive environment for those seeking healing. They are essential virtues for the healer to have and develop if they continue having the healing capacity.

Below is a visual summary of how the different healing traditions integrate values of compassion, love, gratitude and charity into their practices. They may be manifested in specific ways depending on the tradition. Still, they all emphasise the importance of these virtues in promoting holistic wellbeing and healing.

	Compassion	Love	Gratitude	Charity
Judaism	Demonstrated through acts of Chesed (loving-kindness) and Tzedakah (charity)	Love for God and neighbours, guiding ethical behaviour and healing practices	Gratitude in daily prayers, blessings, and during Shabbat and festivals	Tzedakah has a religious obligation to support those in need.
Christianity	Embodied in the teachings of Jesus, emphasising love for others, charity, and intercessory prayer.	Agape love, which is unconditional and selfless, guiding acts of healing and charity	Thankfulness to God through prayers, Eucharist, and daily expressions of gratitude	Acts of charity are inspired by the teachings of Jesus and practised through various forms of giving and service.
Islam	Manifested in the compassionate attributes of Allah and practices like Ruqyah (spiritual healing) and Sadaqah (charity).	Love for Allah and His creation, motivating acts of charity and compassion	Shukr (gratitude) towards Allah for blessings, expressed in daily prayers and supplications.	Zakat (mandatory almsgiving) and Sadaqah (voluntary charity) to support the needy
Buddhism	Central to practices like Metta Bhavana (loving-kindness meditation) and the Bodhisattva path.	Metta is unconditional and non-discriminatory, directed towards all beings without expectation of anything in return.	Gratitude practices are integrated into meditation and daily reflections.	Generosity is a fundamental practice that purifies the mind and fosters connections within the community.
Hinduism	It is considered a crucial aspect of living a dharmic (righteous) life and is integral to spiritual growth and enlightenment.	Expressed through Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion) and Seva (selfless service)	Gratitude expressed through prayers, mantras, and festivals like Diwali	Dana (charitable giving) and supporting community welfare through various acts of generosity.
Reiki	Reiki practitioners cultivate a sense of universal love, recognising the interconnectedness of all beings.	It is essential in motivating practitioners to help others heal physically, emotionally, and spiritually.	One of the five principles is emphasised through daily practices.	Also emphasised in one of the principles is 'be kind.'

*Table I – Compassion, Love, Charity and Gratitude in the Traditions*

## VII. Similarities

Despite their unique beliefs and practices, these major world religions share several common themes and similarities. They share common ground in their faith in a higher power, the importance of sacred texts, moral and ethical guidelines, ritual practices, concepts of an afterlife, community structure, and emphasis on compassion and charity.

These similarities highlight the universal aspects of human spirituality and the shared values that can foster mutual understanding and respect among different religions.

Despite reiki not being a religion, its basic concepts are aligned with the concepts we have reviewed of the five major religions, highlighting that its practice is compatible:

Similarities	Judaism	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Reiki
Higher Power	Belief in a single, all-powerful God (Yahweh).	Belief in one God is expressed through the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).	Belief in one God (Allah), who is omnipotent and merciful	Recognises higher spiritual beings or realms.	Belief in a supreme God and creator (Brahman), which can manifest in various deities	Divine energy (reiki) that can be harnessed for healing
Sacred Texts	The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), including the Torah, Prophets (Nevi'im), and Writings (Ketuvim).	The Bible, comprising the Old and New Testaments	The Quran is believed to be God's word as revealed to Muhammad, and the Hadith is Muhammad's sayings.	Various texts, depending on the tradition, such as the Pali Canon (Theravada) and the Mahayana Sutras	The Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and other sacred texts	Guidelines, including its principles, were those taught by Mikao Usui in the 1920s
Moral and Ethical Guidelines	The Torah's commandments (mitzvot), including the Ten Commandments	The Ten Commandments and teachings of Jesus, such as the Sermon on the Mount	The Five Pillars of Islam and Sharia law.	The Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path emphasise ethical behaviour.	Dharma which varies according to stage of life and personal circumstances	The Five Principles
Rituals and Worship	Rituals include prayer, Sabbath observance, and festivals like Passover and Yom Kippur.	Practices include prayer, sacraments (such as baptism and communion), and church services.	The Five Pillars, including daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and pilgrimage to Mecca	Meditation, chanting, offerings and observing precepts	Rituals include puja, festivals like Diwali, and practices like yoga and meditation.	Encourages meditation to enhance the flow of reiki energy.
Afterlife concept	Varied beliefs, but generally includes concepts of an afterlife or resurrection.	Belief in heaven and hell, with eternal life and resurrection	Belief in an afterlife with paradise (Jannah) for the righteous and hell (Jahannam) for the wicked.	Belief in reincarnation and the cycle of samsara, with the ultimate goal of achieving Nirvana	Belief in reincarnation and karma, aiming for moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth)	Reiki practice is concerned with spiritual evolution and the continuity of the soul's journey.

Similarities	Judaism	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Reiki
Community and Leaders	The synagogue community, with leaders such as rabbis	The church community, with leaders such as priests, ministers, and bishops	The ummah (global Muslim community), with leaders like imams	Sangha (monastic community) and lay practitioners, with leaders like monks, nuns, and lamas	Diverse communities, often centred around temples, with leaders such as priests (pandits) and gurus	There is no community beyond the corresponding professional association.
Emphasis on Love, Compassion and Charity	Tzedakah (charity) and acts of loving-kindness (Chesed) are essential	Charity, kindness, and love are core teachings of Jesus	Zakat (almsgiving) and Sadaqah (voluntary charity) are fundamental practices	Compassion (karuna) and loving-kindness (metta) are central virtues	Dana (charity) and compassionate actions are essential aspects of dharma	The practice encourages compassion and love in healing and charitable actions within the community

*Table II – Similarities in the five major religions & reiki*

## VIII. The Core Principles

We have reviewed the similarities of the five main world religions in their healing practices. Understanding the core ethical and moral principles is advisable to discover that there are universal ethics and morality as well.

### 1. Judaism

#### The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are a set of biblical principles relating to ethics and worship:

- 1.You shall have no other gods before Me.
- 2.You shall not make for yourself an idol.
- 3.You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- 4.Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
- 5.Honor your father and your mother.
- 6.You shall not murder.
- 7.You shall not commit adultery.
- 8.You shall not steal.
- 9.You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet

#### Additional Principles: 613 Mitzvot

**(Commandments):** Traditional Jewish law encompasses 613 commandments covering various aspects of life and worship.

### 2. Christianity

#### The Two Great Commandments:

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. (Matthew 22:37)
2. Love your neighbour as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)

**The Ten Commandments** are shared with Judaism and are part of basic ethics.

#### The Beatitudes: Teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

### 3. Islam

#### The Five Pillars of Islam

- 1.Shahada (Faith): The declaration of faith, stating that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.
- 2.Salah (Prayer): Performing the five daily prayers.
- 3.Zakat (Charity): Giving to charity to benefit the poor and people in need.
- 4.Sawm (Fasting): Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
- 5.Hajj (Pilgrimage): Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

#### Six Articles of Faith

- 1.Belief in Allah
- 2.Belief in the angels
- 3.Belief in the holy books
- 4.Belief in the prophets
- 5.Belief in the Day of Judgment
- 6.Belief in predestination

### 4. Buddhism

### The Four Noble Truths

- 1.The truth of suffering (Dukkha): Life is filled with suffering.
- 2.The truth of the cause of suffering (Samudaya): Desire and attachment cause suffering.
- 3.The truth of the end of suffering (Nirodha): Ending desire and attachment ends suffering.
- 4.The truth of the path to the end of suffering (Magga): Following the Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.

### The Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right Understanding: Understanding the nature of reality and the path of transformation.
2. Right Intention: Commitment to ethical and mental self-improvement.
3. Right Speech: Speaking truthfully and avoiding harmful speech.
4. Right Action: Ethical conduct and refraining from harm.
5. Right Livelihood: Avoiding professions that harm others.
6. Right Effort: Cultivating positive states of mind.
7. Right Mindfulness: Developing awareness of the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena.
8. Right Concentration: Developing deep states of mental focus.

## 5. Hinduism

### Core Principles

1. Dharma: The ethical duty based on the divine order of reality.
2. Artha: The pursuit of material wellbeing.
3. Kama: The pursuit of pleasure.
4. Moksha: Liberation from the cycle of birth and death

### Four Paths of Yoga

- 1.Karma Yoga: The path of selfless action.
- 2.Bhakti Yoga: The path of devotion.
- 3.Raja Yoga: The path of meditation.
4. Jnana Yoga: The path of knowledge

### Key Scriptures and Principles

- Vedas: The oldest sacred texts.
- Upanishads: Philosophical texts exploring the nature of reality.
- Bhagavad Gita: A conversation between Prince Arjuna and Krishna on duty and righteousness.

## 6. Reiki

The Reiki principles are guidelines that help the practitioner help others. Following them is a requirement for divine energy to flow, together with meditative practices and intercession.

### The five principles of reiki

Just for Today:

- Do not Anger
- Do not Fear / Worry
- Be Grateful
- Be Diligent
- Be Kind



## IX. Conclusion

We have explored the healing practices of the five major world religions and reiki to identify common threads and differences. The goal was to understand if these traditions, despite their different names and denominations for the divine being, share similarities in their approaches to healing. Additionally, we aimed to determine whether reiki, an agnostic method rather than a religion, aligns with these practices or, as some believe, diverges into less positive energy realms.

Aspects	Judaism	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Reiki
Source	Divine Energy / Nefesh / Soul / Life Force	Holy Spirit	Ruh / soul/spirit	Qi / Lung / vital life force	Vital Life Force / Prana	Universal Energy, Holy Spirit, Divine Energy
Meditation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer/Intercession	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hand Healing Practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Love, compassion, gratefulness and charity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Core principles/commandments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Table III - All the compared traditions have the same key elements in their healing ministries (Ambar in reiki given as there are no prayers and no commandments, though there is intercession and principles)*

Across all religions, there is a belief in a higher being, and meditation serves as a foundational and transformative practice for healing. Meditation prepares practitioners spiritually, mentally, and energetically for healing by fostering inner peace, enhancing sensitivity to subtle energies, and promoting a compassionate presence conducive to healing. Whether through mindfulness, spiritual communion, or energetic alignment, meditation plays a vital role in empowering healers to facilitate healing and promote wellbeing in others. For healers, being in a spiritual state of connectedness to the source, with meditation as the enabler, is essential for supporting the healing of others.

Prayer and intercession are fundamental in all three monotheistic religions, serving as means to seek divine aid, express gratitude, and support others. These practices highlight the importance of intention, community, and ritual in fostering a deep spiritual connection and invoking divine intervention. Whether through structured liturgies, spontaneous supplications, or meditative reflections, prayer remains a powerful tool for spiritual growth and healing in all contexts.

In Buddhism and Hinduism, prayer and intercession are integral to spiritual practice, though the approaches and emphasis may differ. They believe in the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of cultivating compassion, devotion, and spiritual wisdom to foster wellbeing and healing.

Compassion, love, gratitude, and charity are foundational to all healing practices. Whether through structured rituals, spontaneous acts of kindness, or meditative practices, these virtues help create a healing space that nurtures both the body and the soul. They are a common thread in providing holistic care, fostering a supportive environment, and ensuring that healing practices are carried out with empathy and integrity.

When comparing religions, Reiki shares many similarities, except for specific elements like leaders, community, sacred texts, and prayer practices. Examining the commandments and principles that form

each religion's ethical and spiritual foundations reveals common themes of compassion, duty, and the pursuit of a higher moral and spiritual order.

These practices underscore a universal human quest for healing that transcends cultural and religious boundaries, reflecting a shared understanding of the interplay between mind, body, and spirit.

Reiki shares commonalities with many religious healing traditions in requiring meditation, intercession, spiritual connection, and the cultivation of compassion. Its use of energy transfer, the laying on hands, and the holistic approach to health are similar. Depending on the strictness or flexibility of an individual's or group's religious adherence (in each religion), reiki can align with their practices, allowing practitioners to connect to the source of their faith without conflict and without fear of aligning with 'the wrong' energy.

*Mark 9:39-40 "Do not stop him," Jesus said: "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us."*

As a final comment, you may have noticed that this paper does not address the effectiveness or extent of the healing or miracles based on the various traditions discussed. This omission is intentional, as it was not the purpose of the analysis. All traditions agree that acts of compassion, love, charity, gratitude, and any form of help, healing, or support are valuable and welcome. Attempting to measure who has helped the most or been the most effective undermines the fundamental principle of giving selflessly for the greater good.

## X. Acknowledgements & Bibliography

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I have used Chat GPT v4 to ask some of the cross-practice questions, always in various ways and approaches, to get as ample results as possible to complete the information I may have missed during my initial research. This, in turn, helped me by adding new readings and broadening the information.

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