Religion plays an important role in the daily life of many people throughout the world, influencing each nation’s social norms and cultural traditions.

Tobacco, an indigenous plant of the Americas, is considered a sacrament by many Native American cultures. In the Cherokee tradition, for instance, smoke acts as a messenger carrying prayers to the spirit world. In the pre-Columbian era, ceremonial and ritualistic uses of tobacco leaf in Native American culture were not proscribed and typically did not lead to addiction or create public health problems. Today, however, Native American and indigenous groups exhibit some of the highest rates of tobacco use in the world.

Most major religions of the Old World, founded before the advent of the tobacco pandemic, do not specifically address tobacco in their founding texts, but the general precepts of every religion agree that people should promote their life and health, as well as the security of their family and community.

**RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD BY POPULATION 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnosticism</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous/Other</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baha’i</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Offering cigarettes to monks is a sin.”
—Thai Anti-Smoking Campaign Project poster used to curb smoking among Buddhist monks, 2002

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