John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion

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John Mbiti's work, notably his seminal book *Introduction to African Religion*, marks a cornerstone in the academic study and understanding of African spiritual beliefs and practices. As a Kenyan-born theologian and philosopher, Mbiti sought to illuminate the often overlooked and misunderstood aspects of African religiosity, emphasizing its complexity, depth, and centrality in African life. His approach was groundbreaking, bridging the gap between indigenous spiritual traditions and contemporary religious thought, and highlighting the philosophical underpinnings of African religion as fundamentally communal, oral, and integral to identity and existence.

The Context and Significance of Mbiti's Work

Historical and Cultural Background

During the mid-20th century, Africa was undergoing significant social and political changes, with colonization, independence movements, and increased exposure to Western cultures influencing indigenous communities profoundly. Traditional African religions, often marginalized or

misunderstood by colonial authorities and missionaries, were at risk of disappearing or being misrepresented.

John Mbiti's *Introduction to African Religion*, published in 1969, emerged at a critical juncture when there was a need to validate and articulate African spiritual traditions. His scholarly work aimed to present African religion not merely as primitive superstitions but as authentic, meaningful systems of beliefs with their own philosophies, rituals, and social functions.

Scope and Objectives of the Work

The primary objectives of Mbiti's book include:

1. To introduce and explain the essential features of African religions
2. To dispel misconceptions that African traditional religions are inferior or mere superstition
3. To explore the role of religion in the social and cultural life of African peoples
4. To demonstrate the interconnectedness of religion, morality, and community

Core Concepts in Mbiti's Interpretation of African Religion

Religion as a Vital Aspect of African Life

Mbiti convincingly argues that in African societies, religion is not a separate or isolated sphere but an integral part of everyday life. It influences social relationships, morality, health, and even political authority. Africa's religions are holistic, addressing the entire spectrum of human experience.

Collective and Communal Nature

One of Mbiti's key insights is the community-centric nature of African religion. Unlike Western notions of individual spirituality, African religions emphasize the community's role in religious practice. This is evident in rituals, festivals, and ceremonies that foster social cohesion and reinforce shared values.

Time and Eternity

Mbiti highlights the African worldview regarding time, which is often cyclical and harmonious with the spiritual realm. The concept of ancestors and spirits reflects a persistent link between the living and the dead, emphasizing continuity and reverence for the past.

Supremacy of the Creator and the Spirit World

Central to African religion is the belief in a Supreme Being or Creator, who is often distant yet acknowledged through rituals and prayers. Additionally, spirits, ancestors, and lesser deities play vital roles in everyday life, influencing health, fertility, and social order.

Key Features of African Religions According to Mbiti

Oral Traditions

African religions are predominantly transmitted orally. Myths, legends, and spiritual knowledge are passed down through generations via storytelling, rituals, songs, and dance, emphasizing the importance of oral communities

in preserving spiritual traditions.

Mythology and Rituals

Myths serve as foundational stories that explain the origins of the universe, human existence, and societal values. Rituals, on the other hand, serve practical purposes such as initiating new members, healing, and appeasing spirits.

Sympathetic and Ritual Magic

Magic and rituals are vital in addressing everyday problems. Practices involve offerings, sacrifices, and symbolic actions intended to influence spirits or nature for the benefit of individuals or communities.

Equilibrium and Harmony

Maintaining harmony between humans, ancestors, spirits, and nature is a recurring theme. Misfortune is often perceived as a disturbance in this balance, remedied through rituals and community efforts.

Mbiti's View on the Diversity and Unity of African Religions

Recognition of Diversity

While acknowledging the vast range of beliefs and practices across the continent, Mbiti emphasizes the common underlying principles that unite African religions—such as reverence for ancestors, the importance of community, and the centrality of the spiritual realm.

Unity in Core Principles

Despite variations, African religions share a worldview that sees the divine and spiritual forces as immanent and intertwined with daily life, unlike the more transcendent, individual-focused religions of other parts of the world.

Mbiti’s Contribution to the Study and Preservation of African Religion

scholarly Approach

Mbiti’s methodology combined theological insight with anthropological research, giving his work both academic rigor and cultural sensitivity. He prioritized understanding African beliefs from the perspective of those who practice them, rather than through Western biases.

Impact on African Identity and Liberation Theology

Mbiti’s work empowered Africans to see their spiritual traditions as valid and meaningful. His writings influenced movements advocating for cultural pride and religious independence. In theological spheres, he contributed to the development of African Christian theology rooted in indigenous beliefs, fostering a more contextual approach to faith.

Preservation and Modern Relevance

With global Christianization and modernization, many traditional practices have been threatened. Mbiti’s scholarship has played a crucial role in documenting and preserving African spiritual heritage, offering a foundation for ongoing revival and integration into contemporary life.

Critiques and Limitations of Mbiti's Approach

Potential Overgeneralization

While influential, Mbiti's work has faced criticism for arguably portraying African religion as more homogeneous than it truly is. Africa's diverse cultures mean that practices and beliefs vary wildly, and some argue that his generalizations may obscure important differences.

Emphasis on Traditionalism

Some critics note that Mbiti's focus on traditional beliefs could underrepresent the dynamism and changes within African religions, including syncretism with Christianity and Islam, or adaptations in urban contexts.

Legacy of John Mbiti's *Introduction to African Religion*

Educational and Scholarly Influence

1. Remains a foundational text in African studies, theology, and anthropology courses
2. Influenced subsequent research on indigenous African spiritual systems
3. Inspired a generation of scholars, theologians, and cultural activists

Ongoing Relevance

As Africa continues to navigate modernity and globalization, Mbiti's insights provide valuable perspectives on the resilience and adaptations of indigenous spirituality, emphasizing respect, understanding, and dialogue among diverse religious traditions.

Conclusion

John Mbiti's *Introduction to African Religion* remains a landmark achievement in the academic exploration of Africa's spiritual landscape. By emphasizing the philosophical, communal, and oral dimensions of indigenous beliefs, Mbiti not only rectified misconceptions but also fostered appreciation for Africa's rich religious heritage. His work underscores that African religion is a vital, living, and meaningful part of the continent's cultural fabric, deserving recognition and respect. As scholars and practitioners continue to engage with his insights, the enduring legacy of Mbiti's scholarship invites ongoing conversation about identity, spirituality, and the universal quest for meaning within African contexts.

John Mbiti's Introduction to African Religion stands as a seminal work that has profoundly shaped the understanding of traditional African spiritual beliefs and practices. As a pioneering scholar, Mbiti's insights offer a comprehensive lens through which we can explore the intricate tapestry of African religiosity, highlighting its centrality to African culture, identity, and worldview. His work not only introduced academic audiences to the richness of African spiritual systems but also challenged stereotypes that often depict African religion as primitive or inferior to Western religious traditions.

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Exploring the Significance of John Mbiti's Work

John Mbiti (1931–2019) was a Kenyan-born theologian and scholar whose

contributions to the study of African religion have cemented his legacy as one of the most influential voices in the field. His book, Introduction to African Religion, first published in 1969, remains a foundational text that bridges academic inquiry and cultural appreciation. The book provides an accessible yet profound overview of traditional beliefs, rituals, philosophies, and societal roles embedded within African spiritual life.

Mbiti's approach was distinct in its emphasis on the communal and holistic nature of African religion, contrasting it sharply with Western individualistic religious paradigms. He argued that religion in Africa is not merely about personal faith but is woven into the very fabric of society and identity. His work underscores the importance of understanding African religion on its own terms, emphasizing its internal logic, symbolism, and spiritual worldview.

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Key Themes in John Mbiti's Introduction to African Religion

The Centrality of Community and Ancestors

Mbiti famously stated, "I am, because we are; and, since we are, therefore I am." This phrase encapsulates the African worldview, which places the community and ancestors at the heart of religious life. In this framework, individual identity is inseparable from communal bonds and ancestral heritage.

Core Aspects:

Veneration of Ancestors: Ancestors serve as mediators between the living and the divine, receiving offerings and reverence.

Collective Worship: Religious practices often involve communal rituals, festivals, and ceremonies.

Social Cohesion: Religion functions to strengthen social ties, uphold moral values, and maintain social harmony.

The Concept of God and Deities

Mbiti explores the plurality of divine beings in African religion, often characterized by monotheism with a pantheon of lesser gods or spirits. The supreme god is generally viewed as remote or less involved in daily affairs, with other spirits and ancestors serving as intermediaries.

Important points:

Supreme Being: Often referred to by local names, such as Nyame (Akan), Olodumare (Yoruba), or Mulungu (Chewa).

Spirits and Deities: Represent natural forces or social ideals, such as fertility, rain, or war.

Chiefs and Diviners: Play vital roles as spiritual leaders and intermediaries.

Rituals, Symbols, and Mythology

Rituals form a critical aspect of African religion, encompassing ceremonies for initiation, farming, fertility, and communal events.

Noteworthy elements:

Sacrifice and Offerings: Used to communicate with the divine and seek blessings.

Sacred Objects: Items like masks, idols, or amulets hold spiritual significance.

Myths and Stories: Convey moral lessons, origins of the universe, and cultural values.

Time, Space, and Cosmology

Mbiti emphasizes that African cosmology often views time as cyclical, with profound spiritual significance attached to seasons, life stages, and ancestral veneration.

Key ideas:

Continuity and Renewal: Life is an ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Sacred Spaces: Certain locations are considered holy due to their spiritual significance, such as rivers, mountains, or shrines.

Timeline of Rituals: Rituals are often performed at specific times aligned with cosmic or seasonal cycles.

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The Impact and Relevance of Mbiti’s Work

Challenging Misconceptions

Before Mbiti's work, many Western scholars and outsiders viewed African religion through a lens of misunderstanding or misrepresentation, often considering it animistic or superstitious. Mbiti challenged this by demonstrating its philosophical depth, moral coherence, and social function.

Bridging Cultures

His writing fostered greater respect and appreciation for African spiritual traditions among theologians, anthropologists, and laypeople alike. It highlighted the importance of contextualizing religious beliefs within their cultural settings.

Influence on African Theology

Mbiti’s insights influenced the development of African theology, advocating for a theology rooted in indigenous cultural and spiritual realities. This approach emphasized indigenous concepts of community, spirituality, and morality.

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Critical Perspectives and Ongoing Debates

While Mbiti’s Introduction to African Religion has been highly influential, it

has also faced critique and sparked debates within academia.

Strengths

Provides a holistic view of African spirituality.

Emphasizes the communal and ancestral aspects.

Balances description with interpretative analysis.

Criticisms

Overgeneralization: Critics argue that Mbiti's broad overview may overlook regional and cultural differences among African peoples.

Underemphasis on change: Some contend that his work underrepresents how African religions evolve in response to external influences such as colonialism and modernization.

Potential romanticization: Critics warn against idealizing traditional practices without acknowledging complex social dynamics.

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Influence of Mbiti's Introduction to African Religion in Contemporary Scholarship

The work remains a cornerstone for students, scholars, and practitioners seeking to understand Africa's spiritual landscape.

Educational Impact

Used as a textbook in universities worldwide.

Introduces students to key concepts in African theology and anthropology.

Practical Applications

Guides religious leaders and community organizers in preserving cultural heritage.

Assists in interfaith dialogues by fostering mutual understanding.

Continued Relevance

Despite the changing religious landscape—namely Pentecostalism, Islam, and globalization—Mbiti's emphasis on indigenous worldview and the importance of community continues to resonate.

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Essential Takeaways from John Mbiti's Introduction to African Religion

African religion is inherently communal and relational, emphasizing relationships with ancestors, spirits, and the divine.

Religion permeates every aspect of life, including rituals, festivals, morality, and social organization.

Understanding African spirituality requires appreciating its cultural context, symbols, myths, and cosmology.

African religion is dynamic, capable of adapting and evolving in response to social and historical changes.

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Final Thoughts

John Mbiti's Introduction to African Religion remains a vital resource for anyone interested in exploring Africa's rich and diverse spiritual traditions. It challenges assumptions, promotes respect, and provides a foundation for further study into the philosophical and cultural depths of African religiosity. Mbiti's work reminds us that religion is not merely a set of beliefs but a vital, living force that shapes identities, sustains communities, and embodies the spiritual essence of humanity across the African continent.

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Whether you are a scholar, student, or curious reader, understanding

Mbiti's perspective offers invaluable insights into one of the world's most culturally diverse and spiritually profound regions.

Access to John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion in downloadable format has revolutionized self-directed education and independent learning. In the past, learners often depended on physical libraries, bookstores, or limited institutional resources to access educational materials. Today, digital availability has transformed this landscape, making valuable content instantly accessible to anyone with an internet connection. This shift reflects a broader change in how knowledge is distributed and consumed in the digital age.

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Convenience extends beyond storage and access. Digital formats offer interactive features that significantly enhance the learning experience. Readers can highlight important sections, add personal notes, bookmark key chapters, and perform keyword searches within the text. These tools allow users to engage actively with John Mbiti Introduction To African

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Responsible use of digital resources is essential for maintaining ethical

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Digital access to John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion also fosters intellectual curiosity. With information readily available, learners are more likely to explore new topics, disciplines, and perspectives. Digital books encourage experimentation and discovery, allowing users to move beyond predefined curricula and pursue knowledge driven by personal interest.

Interdisciplinary learning is another significant benefit of digital resources. Learners can easily combine John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion with materials from different fields, creating connections between ideas and concepts. This cross-disciplinary approach supports critical thinking and creativity, helping learners develop a more holistic understanding of complex subjects.

Critical analysis is strengthened through exposure to diverse sources. Digital access allows learners to compare multiple perspectives, evaluate arguments, and assess the credibility of information. Engaging with John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion alongside related works encourages independent thinking and informed judgment, essential skills in both academic and professional contexts.

For students, digital books provide practical advantages that support academic success. Downloadable materials allow for offline study, exam preparation, and revision without constant internet access. Annotation tools help students organize notes and highlight key concepts, improving study efficiency and comprehension.

Professionals also benefit from the convenience and immediacy of digital

resources. Downloading John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion allows professionals to reference relevant information quickly, update their knowledge, and support ongoing skill development. In fast-changing industries, access to up-to-date information is essential for maintaining competence and competitiveness.

Digital organization further enhances the value of downloadable books. Users can categorize files, create searchable libraries, and back up content using cloud storage solutions. This organization ensures that valuable learning materials remain accessible and easy to manage over time, supporting long-term learning goals.

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Environmental sustainability is another important consideration. By reducing reliance on printed materials, digital downloads help conserve natural resources and reduce the environmental impact associated with printing and transportation. While digital technologies have their own ecological footprint, the shift toward electronic resources represents a more efficient approach to knowledge distribution.

The global reach of digital content supports cultural exchange and shared learning experiences. Downloading John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion enables learners from different countries and backgrounds to access the same materials, fostering collaboration and mutual understanding. Digital access contributes to a more connected and informed global community.

As technology continues to advance, self-directed learning will become increasingly important. The ability to download John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion reflects an adaptive approach to education that aligns with modern learning environments. Digital literacy is now a core competency for learners at all levels.

In summary, downloading John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion illustrates the transformative impact of technology on self-directed education. Through portability, convenience, interactivity, and ethical access, digital resources empower learners to take control of their educational journeys. Responsible and informed use of digital platforms enables users to fully leverage John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion for personal enrichment, academic achievement, and professional development in the digital age.

Questions & Answers About john mbiti introduction to african religion

No	Question	Answer
1	Who was John Mbiti and what is his significance in the study of African religions?	John Mbiti was a renowned Kenyan scholar and theologian who pioneered the study of African religions and philosophies. His work is significant because he provided a comprehensive understanding of the spiritual beliefs, practices, and worldviews of African communities, emphasizing the importance of religion in African cultures.

2	What are the main themes discussed in John Mbiti’s 'Introduction to African Religion'?	Mbiti’s 'Introduction to African Religion' discusses themes such as the belief in a supreme creator, the role of ancestors, the importance of rituals and ceremonies, the concept of time and life cycle, and the interconnectedness of religion, culture, and society in African life.
3	How does John Mbiti define African religion?	Mbiti defines African religion as a set of beliefs and practices that recognize a supreme god, spirits, ancestors, and the divine power that influences human life and the natural world, emphasizing communal worship and spiritual interconnection.
4	What are some unique features of African religion highlighted by Mbiti?	Mbiti highlights features such as the central role of community and rituals, the belief in ancestors as mediators between the living and the spiritual realm, and the integration of religion into everyday life and social norms.
5	In what ways did John Mbiti's work challenge Western perspectives on religion?	Mbiti’s work challenged Western misconceptions by portraying African religion as a complex, organized, and meaningful system of beliefs, rather than primitive or superstitious practices. He emphasized its philosophical depth and spiritual coherence.
6	What is the significance of ancestors in African religion according to Mbiti?	According to Mbiti, ancestors play a crucial role as spiritual guides, protectors, and intermediaries who influence the well-being of their descendants and the community at large.
7	How does Mbiti’s introduction to African religion address the concept of time and eternity?	Mbiti discusses the African view of time as cyclical rather than linear, emphasizing the importance of eternity and the continuous connection between the past, present, and future through ancestors and spiritual beliefs.

8	What impact did John Mbiti's 'Introduction to African Religion' have on African Studies and Theology?	Mbiti's work significantly influenced African Studies and Theology by advocating for the recognition of indigenous beliefs, promoting cultural identity, and encouraging scholarly respect for African religious systems.
9	Are there any criticisms of John Mbiti's portrayal of African religion?	Some critics argue that Mbiti's portrayal may overly generalize African religions, which are diverse and vary across regions, and that his emphasis on traditional beliefs may overlook contemporary religious practices and syncretism.
10	How is John Mbiti's 'Introduction to African Religion' relevant today?	Mbiti's work remains relevant as it provides foundational insights into African spiritual beliefs, fosters greater appreciation of African cultural identity, and informs ongoing discussions on religion, tradition, and modernity in Africa.

John Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion, African spirituality, Traditional beliefs, Religion in Africa, African religious practices, Ancient African rituals, African religious beliefs, Spirituality in Africa, African religious philosophy

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Core Discussion

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Consistent formatting allows readers to focus on content rather than navigation challenges.

John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion eBooks are frequently updated to reflect current standards, practices, and emerging trends.

John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion eBooks enable readers to track progress and revisit learning milestones.

Readers often return to John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion eBooks as reference tools.

Digital materials ensure consistent knowledge transfer across teams.

Preserved knowledge supports continuity despite staff changes.

Digital materials ensure consistent knowledge transfer across teams.

Compatibility Tips

Compatibility is a crucial factor when accessing and using John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion in digital form. Ensuring that your device and software support the file format helps prevent reading issues, formatting errors, or loss of functionality. Fortunately, most modern devices are designed to handle common digital document formats with ease.

PDF is the most universally supported format for John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion. Almost all computers, tablets, and smartphones can open PDF files using built-in viewers or free applications. This universal compatibility makes PDF an ideal choice for users who access content across multiple devices or operating systems. PDFs also preserve layout and formatting, ensuring a consistent reading experience regardless of

screen size.

ePub formats offer greater flexibility in text layout, allowing font size, spacing, and margins to adapt to different screens. However, ePub files may require specific readers or applications, especially on desktop computers. Many mobile devices and eReaders support ePub natively, while others may need additional software. Before downloading John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion in ePub format, it is advisable to confirm reader compatibility to avoid conversion issues.

Audiobook formats provide an alternative way to consume John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion, particularly for users who prefer listening over reading. Audiobooks can usually be played on standard media applications available on smartphones, tablets, and computers. Ensuring that the audio format is supported by your device guarantees smooth playback and uninterrupted listening sessions.

Keeping reading applications and operating systems up to date improves compatibility. Updates often include bug fixes, performance improvements, and support for newer file standards. Regular maintenance ensures that John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion files open correctly and that advanced features such as annotations or interactive elements function as intended.

Optimizing compatibility across devices

For users who switch between multiple devices, synchronizing reading apps and cloud accounts enhances compatibility. Progress, bookmarks, and annotations can be shared seamlessly, creating a consistent experience. Choosing widely supported formats and reliable reading software reduces technical friction and improves long-term usability.

Security Tips

Security is an essential consideration when downloading and managing

John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion files. Digital documents obtained from unreliable sources may pose risks such as malware, corrupted files, or unauthorized content. Prioritizing security protects both your devices and personal data.

Avoiding pirated files is one of the most effective security measures. Unauthorized copies often lack quality control and may contain hidden threats. Legal and reputable sources provide verified files that are safe to download and use. Respecting copyright also supports creators and publishers, contributing to a sustainable content ecosystem.

Before downloading John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion, users should verify the credibility of the source. Official publishers, academic libraries, and well-known platforms typically provide secure downloads. Checking website reputation, reading user reviews, and confirming licensing information help reduce risks.

Using antivirus or security software adds an additional layer of protection. Scanning downloaded files ensures that potential threats are detected early. Many modern security tools operate in real time, monitoring downloads and alerting users to suspicious activity. Keeping antivirus software updated enhances effectiveness against emerging threats.

Safe handling of digital documents

In addition to secure downloading, safe handling practices further reduce risk. Avoid enabling macros or scripts in PDF files unless necessary and trusted. Be cautious with files that request excessive permissions or prompt unexpected actions. These precautions help maintain device integrity and user privacy.

File Management

Effective file management ensures that your collection of John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion remains organized, accessible, and easy to

maintain. As digital libraries grow, poor organization can lead to confusion, duplicate files, and wasted time searching for documents.

Clear and consistent file naming is a fundamental aspect of file management. Including key details such as title, author, edition, or date in file names helps identify documents quickly. Consistency across all John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion files prevents ambiguity and simplifies retrieval.

Using folders organized by topic, volume, subject, or date further improves clarity. For example, academic users may categorize files by course or discipline, while personal users may organize by interest or purpose. Logical folder structures make navigation intuitive and scalable as collections expand.

Tagging and labeling provide additional organizational flexibility. Many operating systems and cloud platforms support tags that allow files to be grouped across multiple categories. A single John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion document can be tagged as reference, study material, or important, enabling faster searches without duplicating files.

Version control is particularly important when managing multiple editions or updates. Maintaining clear version identifiers prevents accidental use of outdated content. Archiving older versions separately ensures historical reference while keeping current materials easily accessible.

Maintaining an efficient digital library

Regularly reviewing and cleaning your library helps maintain efficiency. Removing obsolete files, merging duplicates, and updating folder structures keep your John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion collection streamlined. Periodic maintenance ensures that file management systems remain effective over time.

Archiving

Archiving John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion files ensures long-term access and protects valuable information from loss. Digital documents can be vulnerable to accidental deletion, hardware failure, or software issues. Implementing reliable archiving strategies safeguards your collection for future use.

Cloud storage is a popular archiving solution due to its accessibility and automatic backup features. Storing John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion files in reputable cloud services allows access from multiple devices while reducing the risk of data loss. Many platforms offer version history, enabling recovery of previous file states if needed.

External drives provide an additional layer of security for archiving. Storing backup copies on external hard drives or USB devices protects against cloud service disruptions or account issues. Keeping these drives in secure locations further enhances data protection.

A comprehensive archiving strategy often combines cloud and physical backups. Redundant storage ensures that John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion remains accessible even if one storage method fails. Periodic verification of backup integrity confirms that archived files remain readable and complete.

Best practices for long-term archiving

- Use widely supported file formats such as PDF for longevity. - Label archived files clearly with dates and version information. - Maintain multiple backup locations. - Review archives periodically to ensure accessibility. - Update storage media as technology evolves.

Future-proofing your John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion collection

Technology evolves over time, and file formats or storage methods may

change. Choosing standard formats, maintaining backups, and staying informed about digital preservation practices help future-proof your John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion collection. These steps ensure that documents remain usable and accessible for years to come.

Final thoughts on compatibility, security, and archiving

Managing John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion effectively requires attention to compatibility, security, file organization, and archiving. By ensuring device support, downloading from trusted sources, organizing files systematically, and maintaining reliable backups, users can protect their digital libraries and maximize long-term value. These best practices create a safe, efficient, and sustainable environment for accessing and preserving John Mbiti Introduction To African Religion in the digital age.