

WORLD RELIGIONS: SESSION TWO
Feb. 2, 2016
HINDUISM: "THE ONENESS OF IT ALL"

1. Hinduism: Intro

- A. No _____
No _____
No _____
No _____
_____ beliefs and practices
_____ is an 18th/19th century label
- B. "Sanatana Dharma" _____
- C. Scriptures:
The Vedic Scriptures (Four Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas)
Upanishads: Vedanta, "The End of the Vedas"
Shastras, Puranas, Agamas, Tantras (100's of these!)
The Epics: The Ramayana, The Mahabharata & The Bhagavad Gita
- D. Different "paths" to achieve ultimate spiritual goal:
1. Jnana-marga: Path of _____
 2. Karma-marga: Path of _____

Advaita Vedanta Hinduism

Vedanta: Sees the Upanishads as most important
Advaita: "non-dual"; monism
Shankara: 9th century Hindu philosopher
Swami Vivekenanda: Brought Vedanta to the west
Very influential school of Hinduism; popular in the west

3. Bhakti-marga: Path of _____
- 2. How does Advaita Vedanta Hinduism answer the big five universal questions?**

- A. Ultimate Reality: _____
1. Brahman is _____
 2. Brahman is _____ (sat) _____ (chit) _____ (ananda) _____
 3. Brahman is _____
 4. We can experience Brahman at a _____: _____ Brahman.

5. The gods and goddesses are relatable _____ of Brahman. These personal gods can be present in idols (murti), and a devotee can encounter the presence of the god (darshan) during puja (worship rituals).

Popular deities: Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Sarasvati, Parvati, Lakshmi, Durga, Krishna, Rama, Kali, Ma

B. Human Beings

1. In each human being is the _____, the eternal, perfect, indestructible soul.
2. The soul goes through countless _____ in human or animal form. This is called _____. The cycle of birth, death and rebirth is called *samsara*.
3. The purpose of a human is to advance spiritually, realize the true nature of the atman, and eventually be released from *samsara*. There are many paths, techniques and gurus available to make this happen.

C. The Human Problem

1. The human problem is that we are _____ on the wheel of *samsara*.
2. We are trapped because we are _____ of our true nature.
3. We are ignorant because we are under a _____ called *maya*. *Maya* is a false way of seeing the world.
4. The problem of *maya* is compounded by _____, which is the natural, moral law of cause and effect. Good thoughts and actions bring good into a person's life. Bad thoughts and actions bring bad things into a person's life. *All suffering* is the result of one's own karma.
5. Karma causes rebirth (into the appropriate human or animal form). India's *Caste System* is connected to karma. Those with good karma are born higher in the caste system. Those with bad karma are born lower, or as Dalits (outcastes).

D. Values/Morals

1. There is no intrinsic evil; ultimately good and evil are *maya*, illusion, because ultimate reality is non-dual and undifferentiated.
2. But until one is free of illusion, Hindu ethics are driven by a practical concern, that of accumulating good or bad karma.
3. Appropriate actions, or _____, are closely related to one's station in life---what caste you are in, gender, stage of life, etc.

E. Human Destiny

1. When a person dies, their karma determines how they will be reborn. They may be reborn hundreds or thousands of times.
2. When illusion and bad karma are gone at last, the soul is “self-realized” and merges with Brahman. This is called _____.
3. _____ disappears in Brahman.

3. How does Hinduism view other religions?

- A. Tolerance and plurality
- B. Exclusivity and superiority

4. Hinduism and Christianity compared

A good book to read: Ravi Zacharias, *New Birth or Rebirth? Jesus talks with Krishna*

HINDUISM GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| ADHARMA | Unrighteousness |
| ADVAITA | Nonduality; name of a school of Vedanta |
| ATMAN | Real Self; indestructible soul; identical to Brahman in Advaita Vedanta Hinduism |
| AVATAR | Descent of god in bodily form |
| BHAJAN | A hymn or devotional song |
| BHAKTI | Love, devotion; a path toward moksha; a bhakta is a devotee |
| BRAHMA | The "creator" in the Hindu Trimurti (three form) |
| BRAHMAN | The One; the Ultimate Reality; the Supreme Spirit, without shape or form or personality; impersonal absolute; ineffable |
| BRAHMIN | The highest caste in the Hindu system; most priests come from this caste |
| DARSHANA | The viewing or sight of the image of the god or goddess in the temple. |
| DEVI | goddess |
| DHARMA | religion, duty, foundation |
| GHAT | A step by a river from which people can bathe or where bodies are cremated. |
| GHI | Liquified butter (often used for rituals) |
| GURU | Teacher; spiritual master |
| HATHA YOGA | Literally "forced" or "violent" yoga |
| ISVARA | Personal Lord; god |
| JATI | Subcaste |
| JIVA | Individual living being |
| KARMA | The immutable, moral law of cause and effect |
| KSHATRIYA | Second caste; warriors and rulers |
| LINGAM | Phallic symbol of Shiva, usually a stone carving. (plural: linga) |
| MANDIR | A Hindu temple |
| MANTRA | Words or formula for repetition, believed to have inherent power |
| MARGA | a path toward moksha |
| MAYA | illusion; |
| MOKSHA | The liberation of the soul from the cycle of birth and rebirth; merging with God (in some Hindu schools) |
| MURTI | Embodiment; form; presence of a god in an idol |
| OM | Famous Hindu mantra; "The Supreme Being in the form of a sound" |
| PANENTHEISM | The belief that all is <i>in</i> God, but not all <i>is</i> God. God transcends the universe, but all the universe is God. |
| PUJA | Ritual worship of an idol or image, often including offerings of food or flowers, songs, bathing the image, etc. Can be carried out in a temple or shrine, or performed at home |
| REINCARNATION | The belief that when a person dies the soul is reborn in a new body; also called transmigration. |
| SADHU | A Hindu holy man or saint who practices asceticism |
| SAMSARA | The cycle or wheel of birth, death and rebirth. |
| SAMSKARA | Rituals performed at important times in a Hindu's life, such as birth, naming, puberty, marriage and death. |
| SANATANA DHARMA | Another name for the Hindu religion, meaning "the eternal way" |
| SANNYASIN | A person who has given up their home and worldly belongings to live a life as a wandering monk; a renouncer. |
| SHUDRA | The lowest caste; laborers |
| TANTRA | System of practices expounded in post-Vedic texts; focus on rituals and spells |
| TAPAS | Ascetic practices that accumulate karmic merit. |
| TILAKA | A mark made with red paste on a person's forehead as a sign of blessing. |
| TRIMARGA | Three ways; the three paths of works (karma), devotion (bhakti), knowledge (vjana) |
| VAISHYA | Third caste; merchants, artisans |
| VARNA | Caste (<i>varnasramadharma</i> --caste system) |
| VEDANTA | literally "end of the Vedas"; Upanishads; name of an orthodox philosophical system |
| YOGA | Literally-- "union"; name of a philosophical school; also used the same as <i>marga</i> ; a particular set of physical actions that are said to aid the pursuit of enlightenment and moksha. |

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