

“The Cross and the Lotus”

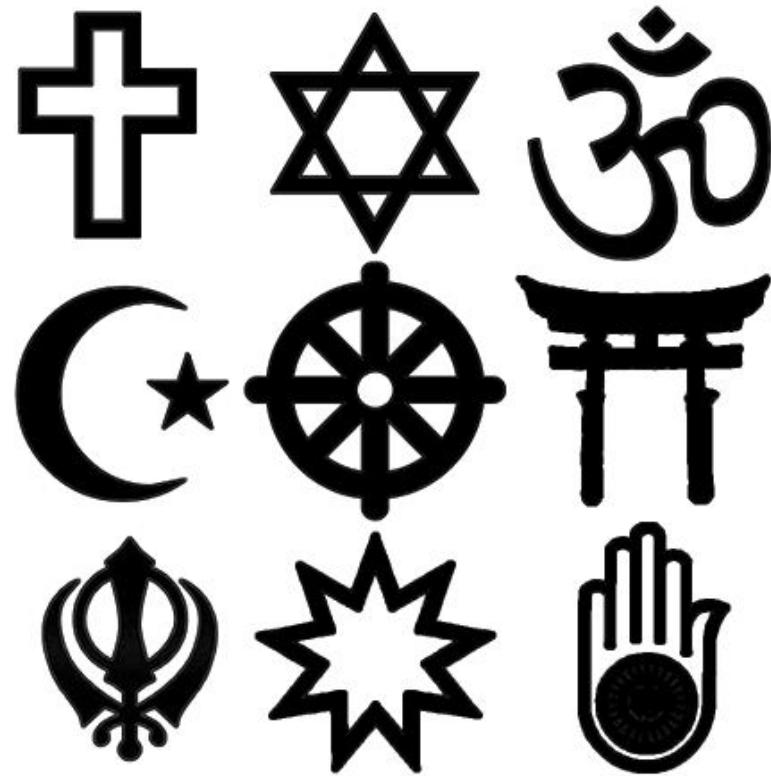
Hinduism & Missions 101

Handout: <http://bit.ly/19HE53m>



- World Religions and Missions
- Dr. Glenn Russell
- Andrews University

World Religions: The Numbers



MISSIONS STRATEGY:

- *Know what they believe and practice before we teach them the scriptures.*

Redemptive Analogies:

an idea or practice embedded in a culture which can be used as an introductory key to present the Gospel

B R A H M A N



- **“universal divine consciousness”**
- **a non-personal god - no attributes**
- **only known through other gods**



“AUM” or “OM”

- The sacred syllable of Brahman
- most elemental expression
- More primal than speech
- The “divine oneness” syllable
- Essential part of meditation or yoga



Brahman: “ONENESS”

- Brahman is the absolute, infinite, unknowable
- All things are one with the universe.
- **Atman is one with Brahman**



Atman = individual soul which keeps being reincarnated.

- *“The Atman has no form, and whatever is without form is without limit; whatever is without limit is omnipresent, and whatever is omnipresent and immortal is God”*

☞ From “Bhagavad Gita”

Brahman and Atman:

- **Brahman:** “He cannot be seen, for when breathing he is called breath. When speaking, he is called speech; when seeing, eye; when hearing, ear; when thinking, mind. All these are only the names of his acts
- **“Let men worship him as Soul {Atman} for in the Soul all these are one. This Soul is the footprint of everything, for through it one knows everything.”**

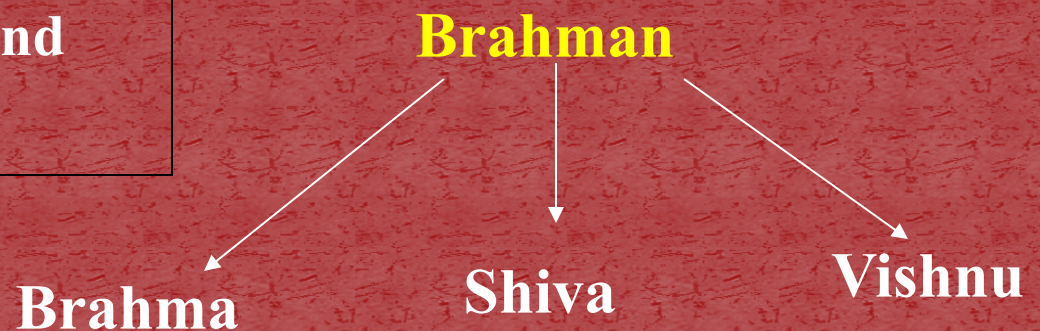
☞ From “Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad 1.4.1-7

The Self/Atman:

- “You were never born; you will never die. You have never changed; you can never change. Unborn, eternal, immutable, immemorial, you do not die when the body dies... As one abandons worn-out clothing and acquires new ones, so when the body is worn out a new one is acquired by the Self who lives within. The Self is everlasting and infinite.”
- You and I have passed through many births, Arjuna. You have forgotten but I remember them all. (enlightenment opens the window of memory to past lives)
- **“Death is inevitable for the living; birth is inevitable for the dead. Death means the attainment of heaven; victory means the enjoyment of the earth.”**

The gods of Hinduism

- Hinduism is polytheistic
- _____ # of gods
- **chief god - Brahman**
- 3 most important gods
Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu
- Millions of lesser gods, forms and manifestations
- Each god has specific roles and functions



Pantheism in Hinduism

- gods/divinity in all things
- all things are part of the cosmic divine force



Hinduism is always changing

- “Hinduism can be seen **more as a culture than a creed.**”

Radhakrosnan, a former president of India

Hinduism is the great absorber:

- Assimilation =

- Syncretism =

Arjuna's Dilemma



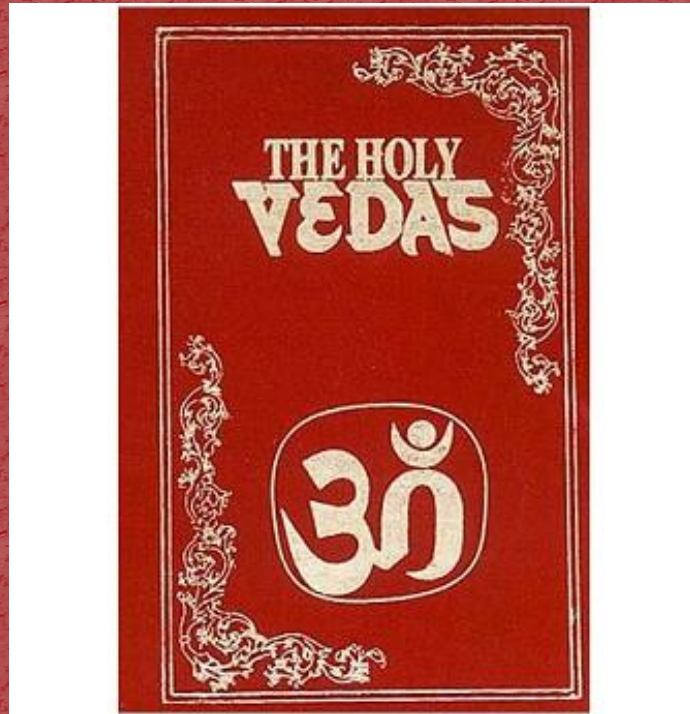
BHAGAVAD GITA

- Famous chapter from the Mahabharata
- Arjuna - warrior
- Krishna – Arjuna's charioteer; incarnation of Vishnu
- Dilemma:
- Dharma = the path of duty

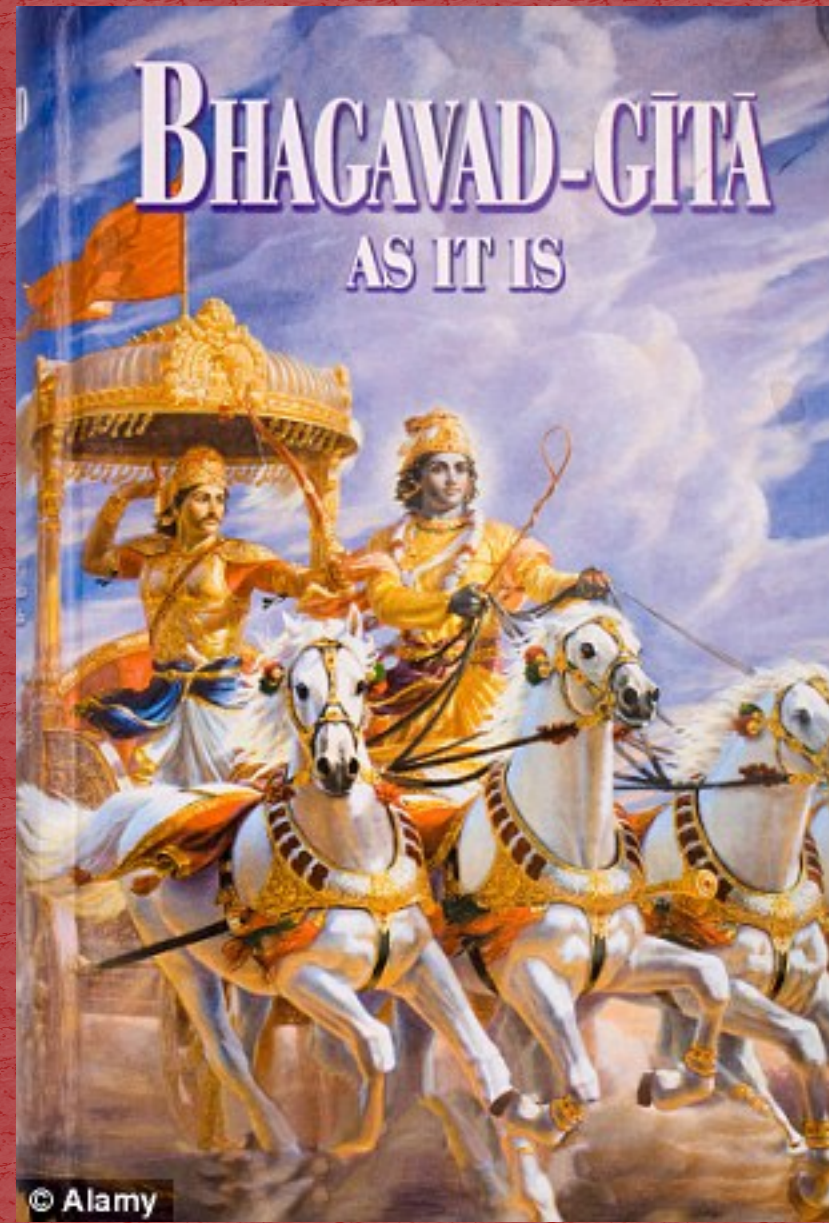


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- VEDAS
 - * collection
- UPANISHADS
- BHAGAVAD GITA

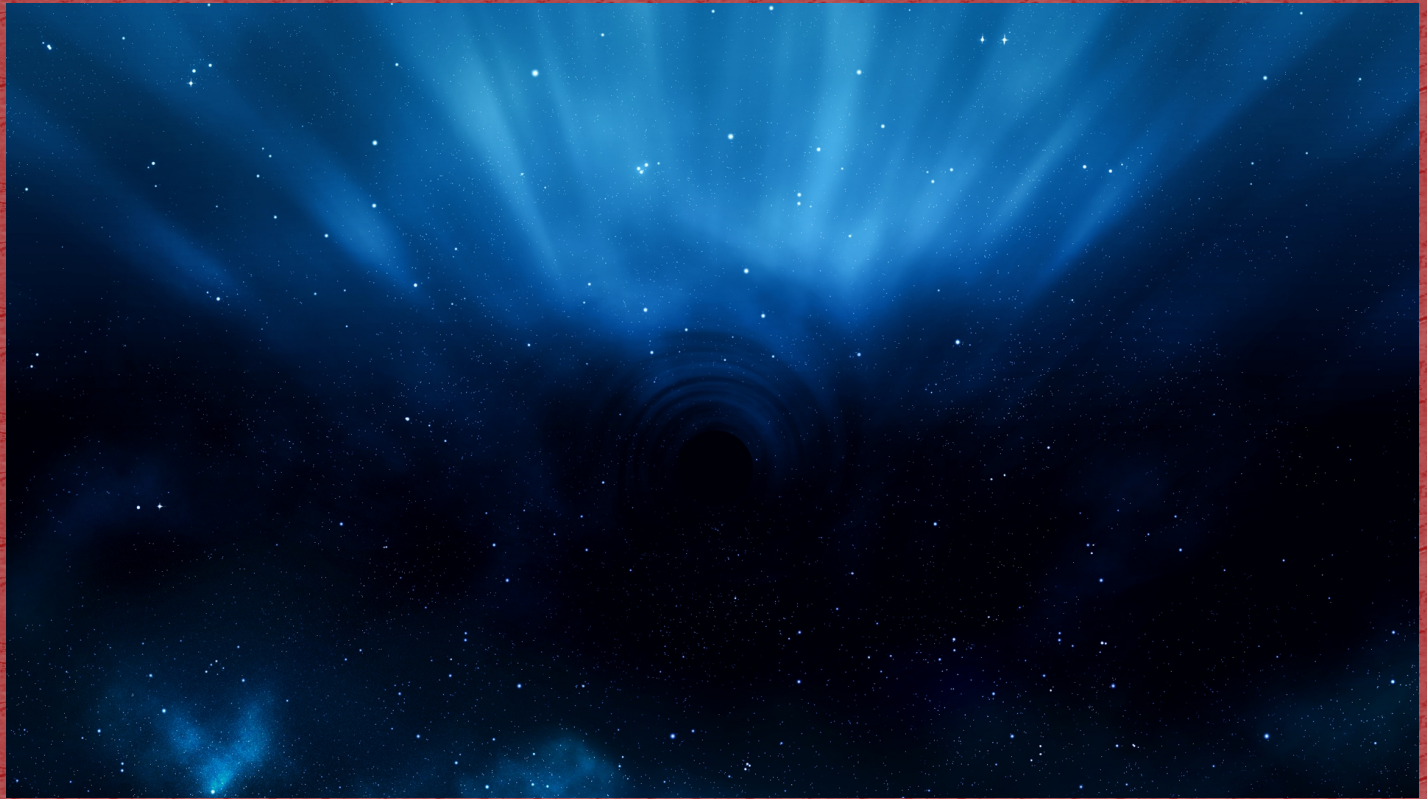


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Illusion =

**We are not conscious (aware) of the
fact that we are one with Brahman.**

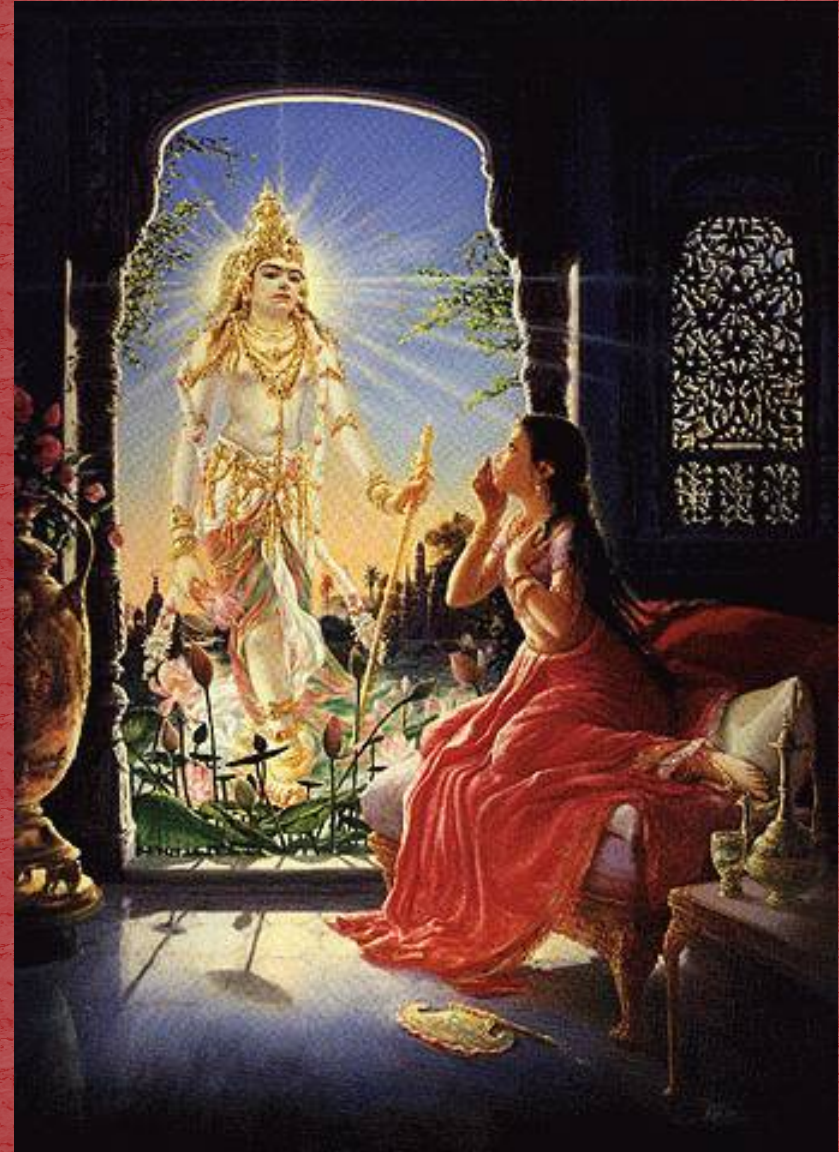
SAMSARA

- The cycle of birth, death, rebirth
- Reincarnation



MOKSHA

Escape or
liberation
from
samsara.



KARMA:



- Every action has its consequences in this life or the next.
- Cosmic law of cause and effect
- Determines next incarnation
- Carried by the Atman into next life

Brahma:

- The god who creates



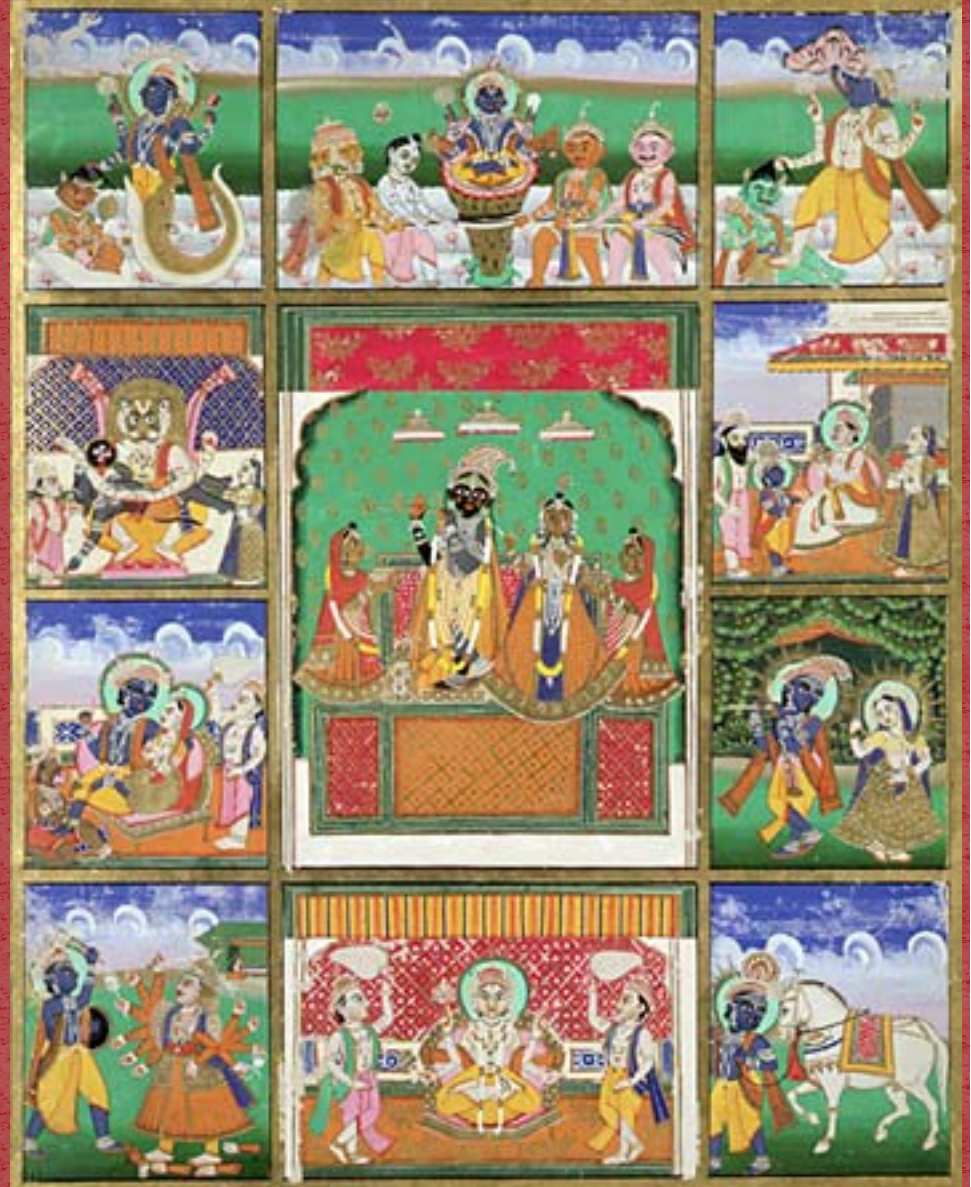
VISHNU

The god who preserves



VISHNU - continued

- 10 incarnations
- relationship to Krishna
- Kalkin – 10th incarnation



SHIVA – the destroyer



Shiva...

- consorts: Kali, Parvati and others



AVATARS

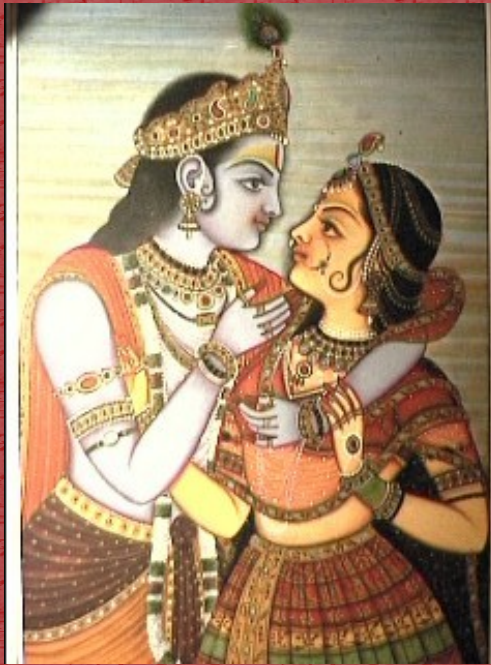
- gods that have taken human form

10 incarnations of Vishnu ->



KRISHNA

- One of the incarnations of Vishnu
- Lover, trickster, sensual seducer



KALI

- goddess who uses her love to take away darkness, demonic forces and impurities
- One of the consorts of Shiva



RAMA



- The “ideal man”, yet a god
- 7th incarnation of Vishnu
- The perfect son, brother, husband, friend and king
- Embodiment of dharma

GANESHA

- god of success
- **removes obstacles**
- son of Shiva and Parvati
- appearance:

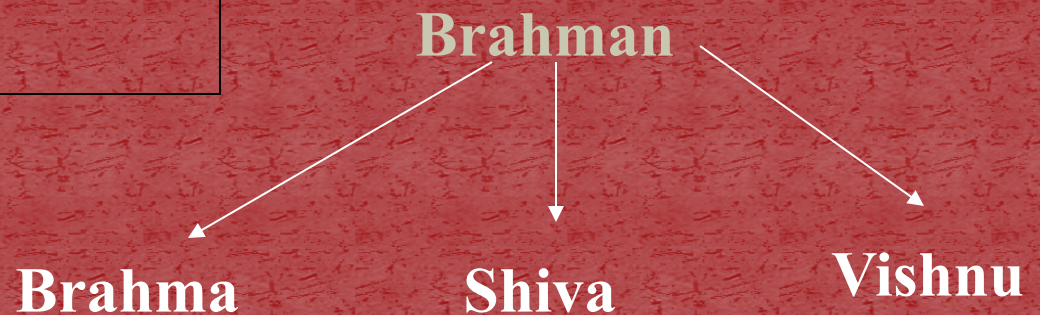


Ganesha



Review: the gods of Hinduism

- 330 million gods
- chief god – Brahman – (not a personal being)
- 3 most important gods
Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu



WORSHIP:

- “Puja” =
- “bhakti” =



Shrine or deity in home



Ways a Hindu can acquire spiritual merit

- The ultimate goal is to attain moksha which liberates one from samsara
- Must follow “dharma”
- **Three paths of liberation**
 - 1) devotion -
 - 2) action
 - 3) knowledge



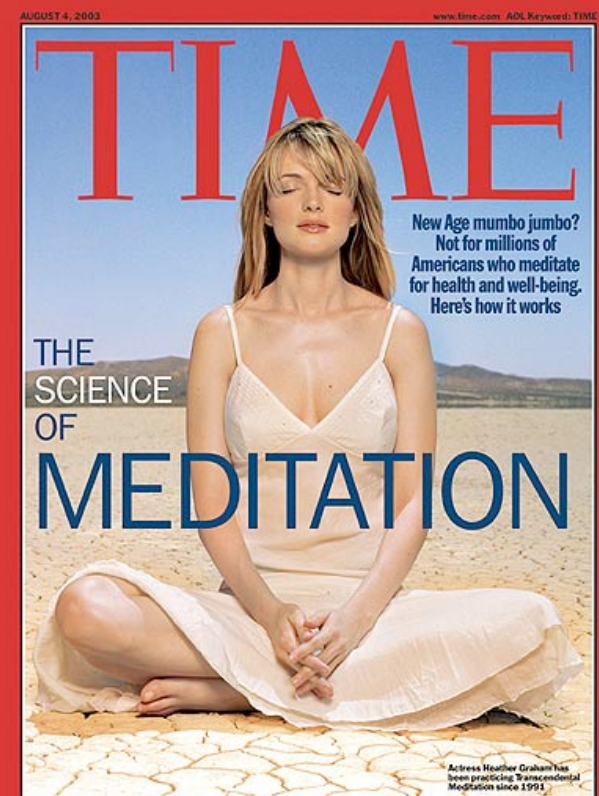
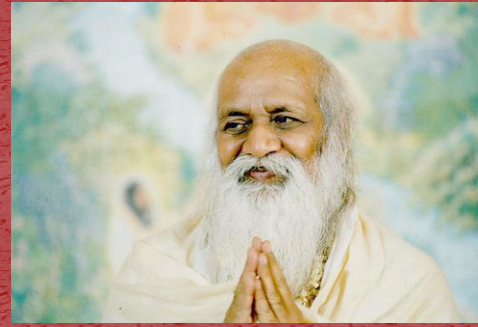
“Enlightenment”



Atman merging with Brahman

Transcendental Meditation

- important discipline for enlightenment
- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
- Goal: empty the mind of thought so that one can experience enlightenment
- Form of spiritual meditation





Yoga

is the journey

of the self,

through the self,

to the self.

- The Bhagavad Gita

YOGA

- Physical and mental discipline to achieve a state of spiritual superconsciousness
- Involves breathing exercises and postures to center oneself and become one with the universe
- **(Radically opposite to Christian meditation which is filling the mind with spiritual thoughts.)**



Purity

- Purity involves personal cleanliness
- **3 key pollutants:**
- Ritual Bathing
- **Affects worship and social caste**
- Caste is lower if work involves pollutants
- Diet affected (vegetarianism)
- Respect for life and blood
- Reverence for animals



Caste system

- Extremely influential in Hinduism
- 4 major castes:
 - 1. Brahmins - priests & philosophers
 - 2. Kshatriyas: Nobility, warriors, vassals
 - 3. Vaishyas: Farmers & merchants - generate economy
 - 4. Shudras: Manual laborers & artisans
- Dalit - Untouchables - outcasts - polluted
- Woman: identity as daughter, wife, mother

Valuable Insights from Hinduism

- **Respect for life**
- **Value of nature**
- **Worth of the extended family**
- **Devotion to religious practice**
- **Respect for diversity and complexity**
- **Life is a journey to seek spiritual truth**



MAJOR DIFFERENCES WITH CHRISTIANITY

1. **Pantheistic, not theistic**
no distinction between Creator and creation
2. **Hinduism is polytheistic and pantheistic**
3. **A religion of escape rather than fulfillment**
4. **Claims that all religions are equally valid pathways to God and salvation**
5. **Syncretism: mingles truth and error.**
6. **Non-biblical teachings about death & reincarnation**
7. **No grace or atonement; A religion of human works**
not salvation as a gift from God through Jesus Christ

The Mission Challenge – and Opportunity

- ❖ over 1 Billion Hindus
- ❖ Hinduism = nationalism Adventism = Western
- ❖ Caste system
- ❖ **Hinduism is the great absorber**
- ❖ Bible study: Jesus Divine! 1 more!
- ❖ **Approach = Stories & Parables**

To All!

CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIONS

66 Orangefield Road

Chase Village, Carapichaima

Trinidad & Tobago

Email: **Hindustudycenter@gmail.com**

Mission to the Hindu World

- Andrew Tompkins: Associate Director. Center for South Asian Religions.
 - **TompkinsA@gc.adventist.org**

Attractive Strategies

- Vegetarianism = health connection
- SABBATH = “A day totally dedicated to showing devotion to God”
- **Live it – Don’t’ just profess it.**
 - The example of a genuine relationship with God.
 - Share your authentic devotional life
 - Hindus respect a genuine faith journey
 - Genuine relationship with someone who loves Jesus and lives life with Him at the center

“The Cross and the Lotus”:

Hinduism and Missions 101

The
Beginning?



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