

Eastern Religions – Hinduism and Buddhism

There are 6 billion people on earth. Almost all of them are monotheists or believing in one god. Few anymore are polytheist, believing in many gods.

You are familiar with Judeo-Christianity and YHWH or God. Jews and Christians account for about 1 billion or a billion and a half of the world's people. What about the other four and a half? To the Far East in India and China are two great, powerful religions. First,

Hinduism: name for a family of religions in India based on a world soul.

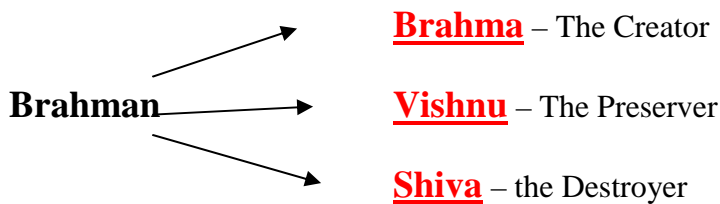
- No founder, no Moses or Jesus, simply evolved
- Indians don't have a name for their religion, Hinduism is our word
- Monotheistic and polytheistic

Brahman: the World Soul. Neither male nor female. Everything spiritual and material is Brahman. (Doesn't sound that much different from YHWH right)

Wrong:

Brahman appears in many aspects or personalities.

Depends on the job that needs to be done and there are over a million of them. They are different gods but they are Brahman. Three main aspects.



Other cool ones

Kali – goddess of death.

Ganesh – elephant headed, god of wisdom.

Indra – storm god, master of rain clouds, slayed demon Vritra

Hanuman – monkey general made a god

Durga – warrior goddess

Gayatri – protection goddess

Hindus believe that Brahman appears in so many different aspects so that people can comprehend his purpose. If you worship any aspects of Brahman you are also worshipping Brahman. If you tell a Hindu that they should worship God, they would say they already do. If you told them YHWH, they would tell you that the Christian god is just another aspect or personality of Brahman.

All is Brahman. What about you then?

You are Brahman too. But not your body, it's just a silly bag of blood and guts. It's not you, it's just temporary housing for the real you – your immortal soul.

Atman: your undying, immortal soul. You are a little piece of Brahman. What happens to your atman after you die?

Reincarnation: your body dies and your soul gets a new one. You are born again. Who are you born as or what?

Law of Karma: actions during your previous lifetimes determine your birth. Learn lessons lifetime to lifetime until you pay for your sins and you are ready to rejoin Brahman.

- Your soul and Brahman know the score and the lessons you must learn
- Death is not an ending, just a different beginning
- Suffer in this life, that's ok, learn from it and grow spiritually
- Born again in this world or in a number of different heavens or hells
- Some believe you may be reincarnated as animals or insects
- All life is sacred

Maybe you like to see animals suffer. And you go deer hunting and you like to wound the deer before killing it. Your next life maybe you are that same deer.

Eventually maybe through thousands of lives your soul attains complete knowledge and understanding from every point of view. Released from the cycle of rebirth.

Nirvana: snuffed out. Your atman – soul reunites with the One – Brahman. You know everything and you are everywhere.

What if humanity on the wrong track and people aren't progressing towards the One, towards Brahman. Then Brahman will send a special messenger to teach and guide humanity back.

Avatar: “descent” Brahman in the form of Vishnu takes on human form to guide and aid humankind. Hindus would call Moses or Jesus avatars.

Kalki - Hindus await the 10th avatar who will ride a white horse and carry a flaming sword vanquishing the wicked.

How do Hindu's learn all of this stuff?

Vedas – sacred books of knowledge. 21 volumes. Author?

Gurus – Hindu religious teachers

There are temples all over India to the various gods where you make prayers and simple offerings. Many homes have miniature temples.

Sacredness of the Ganges and Holy cows!

Belief is that the river issues from the feet of Vishnu in heaven and falls upon the head of Shiva flowing down his hair.

Millions go each year to have their sins washed away. If you die near some of the sacred sites along the river you automatically are transferred to Shiva's heaven of unending delight.

Holy cows

Killing a cow once meant death; still means banishment in many villages...

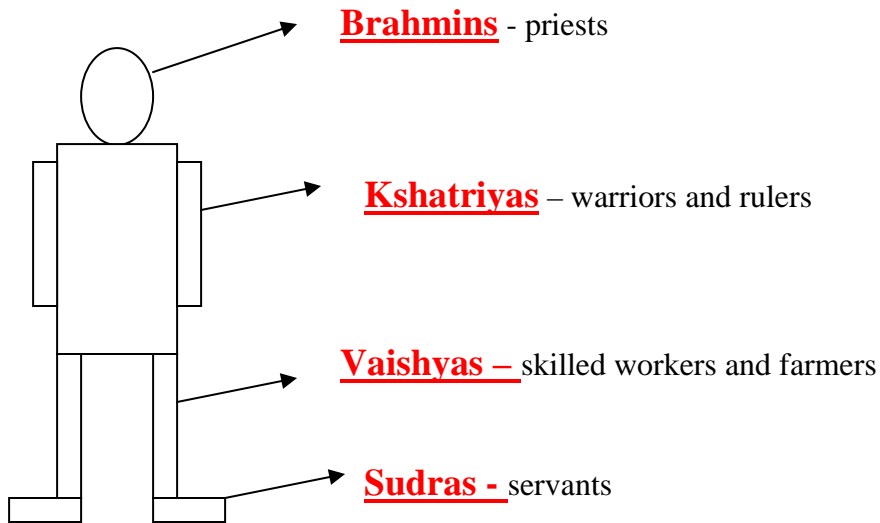
“All that kill, eat, and permit the slaughter of cows rot in hell for as many years as there are hairs on the body of a cow so slain.”

Mahabharata

According to Hindu belief, Brahma sacrificed a cow to create the universe. The dismembered parts of the cow create all.

Hinduism is a great faith but there is a negative aspect to it

Caste system: rigid social division of people in society based on birth and occupation. Page 155 World Religions 1st paragraph



Untouchables – outside of the system. Treated with contempt.

- Thousands of sub castes today
- Cannot marry or socialize outside your caste
- Based on karma. Hopefully move up in the next life
- Outlawed in India today but persists in rural areas

Handout



AUM - Aaaaaaa – God

Um – Sound of creation

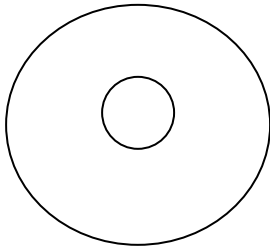
Buddhism

Christianity grew out of Judaism. A great religion also grew out of Hinduism.

Siddhartha Gautama - Buddha “the awakened one” – 9th avatar in Hinduism. Vishnu on earth and founder of Buddhism.

5 years he meditated seeking enlightenment. Never found it until he stopped looking. Suddenly receives it and begins preaching. People amazed as they had never heard such wisdom from any man. They asked if he was a god, then if he was a saint, then what are you --- I am awake. He realized life was a dream and when you know that you are awake.

Four Noble Truths



- 1. All existence is suffering**
- 2. Suffering is caused by selfish desire**
- 3. Selfish desires can be extinguished**
- 4. The means to control desire is the Eight-fold path**

Right understanding

Right vocation

Right purpose

Right effort

Right speech

Right alertness

Right conduct

Right concentration

If you eliminate desire you eliminate suffering —————→ NIRVANA
For a Buddhist this life is hell and you will continue to be reborn here until you eliminate your desires. How is it hell? It is hell compared to the joy and completeness of Nirvana

SOLID GOLD CADILLAC What is the better long term goal?
Wisdom or the Cadillac?

Dalai Lama – reincarnated Buddhist spiritual leader from Tibet which is part of China. Current Dalai Lama is the 14th incarnation. Great scholar and man of peace. Buddhist Pope.