

## **CHAPTER THREE: LIFE AGAINST TIME: THE SPIRITUAL PATHS OF INDIA**

### **Chapter Outline and Unit Summaries**

#### **I. The Face of India**

- A. A Country of Strange and Violent Extremes
- B. A Place of Extreme Potentials of Human Life in all Directions
  - 1. Ecstasy
  - 2. Beauty
  - 3. Deprivation
- C. A Deep and Ancient Spirituality is Central to this Society
  - 1. Myriad of Temples are in every City Center
  - 2. Sunset Prayers sung to Ganga, the Ganges River Goddess and the God Shiva
  - 3. Statues and Images of Gods and Goddesses
  - 4. Venerated Spiritual Leaders, Teachers, and Ancestors
  - 5. Reverent people
  - 6. “Namaste” greeting acknowledges the Divine in Everyone, high and low

#### **II. Understanding Hinduism**

- A. Approximately 80% of the People in India are Hindu
- B. Betty Heimann - Hinduism presses Biology beyond the Point of Other Religions set Humankind and Nature, or Mind and Body, against Each Other.
  - 1. The Biological and the Divine are One
  - 2. Life is a Unity Hidden within a Duality
- C. Indian Worldview is Deeply Biological: Cosmos as Organism
  - 1. The Meaningful Dualism of Hinduism is the Conditioned and Unconditioned, Not Male-Female or Mind-Body
  - 2. The Polarity of Dharma and Moksha in Hinduism
  - 3. Doctrine of *Dharma*
    - a. Social Order in Accord with Cosmic Order (called *Rita*)
    - b. Duty and Moral Behavior in order to Uphold the Social Order and Demarcating One's Place in Society

- c. Suppressing Individual to Harmonize with Whole Pattern of Cosmos
  - d. One's Personal *Dharma* Determined by *Karma*
  - e. One Can Rebel Against but Not Escape One's *Karmic Dharma*: As One Sows, One Reaps
  - f. Retribution or Reward Follows Obedience to One's *Karmic Dharma*—Rebirth to Higher or Lower State
- 4. Doctrine of Moksha: "Leaping Out" of Quest for Pleasure (*kama*), Gain (*artha*), and Righteousness (*dharma*—A State of Liberation Beyond All Striving)
- D. The Goal of Hinduism: "Freedom"
  - 1. Release from All Conditions, Liberation from All That Circumscribes One's Sense of the Infinite
  - 2. Awareness of the One *Brahman*, or Universal Being Beyond All Personalities and Difference

### III. Ancient Indus Valley Religion

- A. The Religion of the Ancient Dwellers in the Indus Valley
- B. Vedas: The Oldest and Fundamental Official Scriptures of Hinduism
  - 1. Basic Source of Hindu Understanding of Universe Upon Which All Later Hindu Texts Comment
  - 2. Original Gods of the Veda were Vital, Flashy, Brilliant Beings of the Sky and Storm, and Dwell in the Three Levels of the Known Cosmos: Sky, Atmosphere, and Earth
    - a. Indra: Most Popular Deity
      - (1) Dwells in the Atmosphere "Where the Action is"
      - (2) Comparable to "Thor" in European Mythology
    - b. Dyaus
      - (1) Sky Father, Shadowy, Remote, *Deus Otiosus*
      - (2) Comparable to Zeus in Greek Mythology
    - c. Aditi
    - d.
      - (1) Mother of the Gods
      - (2) Beyond Shadow or Stain
    - e. Varuna and Mitra: Kingly figures who uphold *Rita*.

- f. Aditi and Ushas
  - (1) The “Dawn,” Female Figure who is Passive and Indistinctly Conceived
  - (2) Subjected of Lovely Hymns

### 3. Deities of Rituals

- a. Agni
  - (1) Lively Magician of Life and Death
  - (2) Messenger of the Gods, Derived from the English “Ignite”
- b. Soma Represents Sacred Drink of Power and Immortality that Gods Consumed, especially Indra

### 4. Brahmin rites

- a. Brahmin from the Root Meaning of “Magical Force” or “Spell”
- b. Brahmin Priests controlled Sacrifices and Became like Higher Gods
- c. Sacrifices controlled the Gods
- d. Brahmins
  - (1) Like “Technicians”
  - (2) Correct an Imbalance or Produce a Desired Result

### 5. Tapas

- a. Generated by Real Sacrifice
- b. Paved the Way for Philosophy and Yoga
- c. Built up through Asceticism of Fasting and Concentration
- d. Power used by the Adept to Bless, Curse, or gain Cosmic Vision

## C. The Upanishads

### 1. A Collection of Vedic Literature

- a. Must be Mature enough to ask the Right Questions
- b. Composed as early as 800 B.C.E.
- c. Transmitted Orally as part of Vedic Scriptures

### 2. The Great Inner Knowledge is “Atman is Brahman”

- a. Atman is the Innermost Self - the Soul
  - b. Braham is the Universal One Existent
- 3. Movement from Veda to Upanishad is expressed in the Katha Upanishad
  - a. From the Traditional Vedic World
    - (1) Worldly Social Obligations of Patriarchal Society
    - (2) Power of the Sacrifice extends from this World to the Next
  - b. Shift in Discourse: The Secret of Death
    - (1) Self within is the Imperishable, Changeless Brahman, and the One Beyond
    - (2) The Mantra that expresses Braham is “OM”
    - (3) OM is The Self, the Omniscient Lord, who is not Born and does not Die
    - (4) The Self – Atman, who is the Brahman, only Being, Sole Existent, and One Mind
  - c. The Messengers are Great Sages
  - d. The *Rishis* or Seers composed the Vedas
  - e. Teachers bring Students into Brahman Consciousness
  - f. Upanishadic Vision - the Mind played All Parts
- 4. Mandukya Upanishad
  - a. Three Aspects of Self (as Conscious)
    - (1) Ordinary Waking Consciousness
    - (2) Enjoy a Mental World created within the Head
    - (3) Self in the State of “Deep Sleep without Dreams,” Internal and External
    - (4) True Self, OM or AUM - Unification of the other Three Aspects

#### **IV. Spiritual Ferment and the Rise of Buddhism**

- A. Spiritual Movement in India produced the Upanishadic “Interiorization of Sacrifice”
- B. Religious Emphasis on Fertility, Mother, Purity, and presumably the Mystic States of Consciousness attained by Yogic Techniques
- C. Move towards Mystical Monism
- D. Rudimentary Form of Doctrine of Reincarnation in Earlier Vedas

1. Central to later Hinduism and Buddhism
2. Appears first in the Upanishads

E. Brahmins

1. Not Teachers who defend the Vedic Tradition
2. Mostly Priests retained by the Courts or living in their own Communities

F. New Teachers

1. Philosophical Teaching not to be Abstract
2. Aid to Attain State of Inner Liberation
3. Each School include an Empirically Tested Spiritual Path

G. Two Wanderers founded Faiths that Symbolize for Many the Highest Conceivable State

1. Vardhamana, called Mahavira (“Great Hero”), founded the Jain Religion
  - a. Jainism remains Fairly Unchanged
  - b. Remains Primarily in India
2. Siddhartha Gautama, Sakya Clan, Contemporary of Mahavira, called the Buddha or Enlightened One (Buddhism)
  - a. Initial Prosperity in India due to Close Relation to Indigenous Tradition
  - b. Tolerant of Hindu and other Gods who are Seen as Pupils of the Buddha
  - c. Spread over Continental Areas
  - d. Incredible Diversities of Sect and Practice
  - e. Died out in India while spreading to from Siberia to the West
  - f. Path is called the “Middle Way”

V. The Laws of Manu (Circa 100 C.E): Post-Buddhist Hinduism

- A. Systemization of the Hindu View of Society and
- B. Contains the Teaching about “Four Ends of Human Life” and “Four Stages of Life”
- C. Rationalize the Caste System that Places One in the Great Social Order
- D. Two Hard to Reconciled Concepts of the Hindu Experience Addressed in the Laws of Manu

1. Dharma
  2. Moksha – One’s Duty in Society and Liberation
- E. The *Varna* (literally: colors) System of Social Stratification
1. The Brahmin (Priest) at Top of Social Strata
  2. The Kshatriya (Ruler) Second in Social Strata
  3. The Vaishya (Artisans, Merchants, Farmers) Third
  4. The Shudra (Servant) at Bottom of Social Strata
  5. The Harijan (Untouchables)
- F. Divisions in the Caste System come from Different Parts of Primal Man’s Body
1. Brahmins – Head
  2. Kshatriyas – Arms
  3. Vaishya – Thighs
  4. Shudras – Feet
  5. Caste System secured the Place of Priests in Society
  6. Intended to Provide Stability by Distributing Social Power among the Top Varnas
  7. Sacerdotal
  8. Military
  9. Economic
- G. Pass Duties and Preserve Occupational Skills of Each Varna Generationally
- H. Caste System became Rigid
1. Social Disjunction
  2. Development of a Hierarchy of Classes
  3. Static Society
  4. Lower Castes suffered Disabilities in Education and Occupational Choices
  5. Untouchables Required to Live Outside Village and Town Boundaries

## VI. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (c. 300 C.E.)

- A. Developed by Patanjali, Codified in *Yoga Sutra*
- B. Return Hinduism to India’s Deeply Biological, Psychosomatic Understanding of Human Nature
- C. Hatha-yoga, the Physical Yoga of Postures and Breathing Exercises
- D. “Yoga” Derived from *yuj*, “to yoke, join”

- E. Follows Sankhya Philosophical System
- F. Emphasis on Meditation as Means of Release, Reincarnation
- G. The Eight Steps/Limbs of Raja Yoga Practice
  - 1. *Yama* and *Niyama* – Positive and Negative Moral Rules aimed at a Life of Quietness, Gentleness, and Purity
  - 2. *Asana* (Posture) and *Pranayama* (Breath Control)
  - 3. *Pratyahara*- The Stage of Disengagement to Liberation
  - 4. *Dharana* (Concentration)
  - 5. *Dhyana* (Meditation)
  - 6. *Samadhi* (Absolutely Equalized Consciousness of Perfect Freedom)
- H. The Bhagavad-Gita
  - 1. Wisdom of the Upanishads, Societal Description described in the Laws of Manu, and Methods/Goals of the Yogi synthesized by Patanjali are found in the Bhagavad-Gita (“Gita”)
  - 2. Epic Poem of Indian Culture and Religion (c. 100 C.E.), Analogous to Homeric Poems of Greek Culture and Religion
  - 3. Bhagavad Gita (“Song of the Lord”) is Chapters 25 to 42 of the Longer Epic Called the Mahabharata
    - a. *Mahabharata* is Story of Struggles Between Two Leading Families for Throne of Aryan State
    - b. *Mahabharata* Written Over Long Period, but Bhagavad Gita Written and Inserted into it Later
    - c. Families in *Mahabharata* Have Final Epic Battle between 850 and 650 B.C.E.
    - d. The *Bhagavad Gita* is Dialogue Prior to Battle Between the Warrior Arjuna and His Charioteer Krishna (the Incarnation of the God Vishnu)
    - e. Krishna’s Three Basic Answers reflecting Three Kinds of Spiritual Paths
      - (1) Jñāna-yoga – the Way to Knowledge, Emphasizing the Upanishadic-type Realization of the Oneness of all Things attained through Meditation
      - (2) Karma-yoga – the way of activity; a Liberation reached by Selfless Action
      - (3) Bhakti-yoga – the way of love for God in personal form
    - f. Religious Implications of *Bhagavad Gita*
      - (1) Bad *karma* Results if Disobey Caste Duties

- (2) Variety of Means of Release from *Samsara*
- (3) Vishnu Loves Humans and Comes to Earth in Multiple Incarnations to Help Them
- (4) Devotion (*bhakti*) to Vishnu—and Other Personal Gods—is Valid

## **VII. Advaita Vedanta**

### **A. Vedanta System**

- 1. Vedanta Means “End of Vedas,” Meaning it is Peak of Vedic Teaching and Based Largely on Upanishads
- 2. The Last and Most Philosophic of the Vedas
- 3. About Brahman as one with Atman
- 4. The Sole Existent

### **B. Advaita Vedanta (Non-Dual) Developed by Shankara (?700-?750 C.E), Devotee of Shiva**

- 1. Shankara’s Commentary on Vedanta Sutra Classic of Medieval Hinduism, Teaches Doctrines of Avidya (Ignorance) and Maya (Illusion) and Need to Attain True Brahman Consciousness that All is One
- 2. Shankara Reformed and Promoted Monasticism - Established Four Great Monastic Centers in India
- 3. Tried to Modify the Harshness of the Caste Distinction and Encourage Devotion to the Hindu Gods

## **VIII. Tantrism**

- A. Spiritual Movement Across Buddhism and Hinduism in Early Medieval Period
- B. Enlightenment Gained by Shock Therapy Techniques that Induce Power Consciousness-Transforming Experiences, Tends to be Dissident Movement Protesting Mainstream
- C. Sexuality important because it offers the “Shock Therapy” Effect of Sexual Rites, it is a Tremendous Evoker of Energy, and a Symbol and Sacrament
- D. Important to the Tantric Tradition is Kundalini (Serpent Power) and Chakras (Seven Circles or Lotus Centers of Dormant Psychic Energy)

## **IX. Devotional Hinduism**

- A. Early Medieval Hinduism Unites India in System Integrating Folk-Gods and Buddhism with Great Gods of Hinduism



- a. Creation of Vast System of Caste and Sub-castes (jati)
  - b. The Integrated Sub-castes Retain Traditional Devotion to Local Folk-Gods Under Rubrics from Vedic System
  - c. Devotion (Bhakti) Given to the Gods Weighs More in New System than Legal Righteousness, Caste, or Ritual
  - d. Puranas: Accounts of the Myths, Words, and Methods of Worship of the Devotional Gods
  - e. Devotional Hinduism is the Face of Popular Hinduism
- B. The New Understanding of Moksha in Devotionalism
1. Liberation from Egocentricity Through Love for Chosen God
  2. One Becomes What One Loves: Devotion as the Path to Sharing in the God's Connection to the Absolute
  3. Contrary to Ascetic Path, the Opposite Extreme of Devotionalism Seeks to Use Particular Gods as Stepping-Stones to Love of All
  4. Liberation Through Aesthetic-Sensory Worship
  5. Agamas detail Ritual Ceremonies, Theologies, and Spiritual Practices in worshipping Various Devotional Gods and Goddesses
- C. Ramajuna (b. 1017 C.E.), Theologian of Bhakti
1. Trained in Vedanta Advaita, but Rebels Against it
  2. Devotee of Vishnu Who Advocates a Model of Universe with God as Head and Cosmos as Body
  3. Ramajuna Advocates for a Personal God of Love to Whom Souls Can Relate
- D. Devotion to Vishnu and the Vishnu Family of Deities
1. Vishnu; The God of Love, Benevolence, Forgiveness, Play, Order, Righteousness
  2. Masculine Figures Dominate Vishnu System
  3. Appeared in Different Forms (avatars) to Assist Humans in Establishing Righteousness in World
    - a. Avatars of Vishnus: Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Parasurama, Buddha
    - b. The Avatar Rama (Wife: Sita, an Incarnation of Lakshmi)
    - c. The Avatar Krishna (Name Means "The Dark One")  
Appears in Three Modes: The Marvelous Infant, the Divine Lover, and the Great Hero of the Bhagavad Gita; a Playful Figure, Worshipped with Dance and Music
    - d. Tenth Avatar of Vishnu, Kalkin, Will Come at End of World to Judge Wicked and Reward Virtuous

4. Devotees (Vaisnavas) Tend to Equate Vishnu with Brahman of the Upanishads, Compose Poems and Songs, Be Vegetarian, and Celebrate Devotion with Loss of Self in the Divine
  - a. Creator Brahma Rises from Vishnu's Navel
  - b. Wife: Lakshmi, Guards World's Welfare, Goddess of Fertility, Wealth, Victory
  - c. Consort: Bhu-Devi (Earth)

E. Devotion to Shiva/Shakti and the Shiva Family of Deities

1. Shiva: Post-Vedic God, Based on Aryan God Rudra
2. Shiva is among Most Popular God in Post-Classical Hinduism, Seems to be Summation of Much of Non-Aryan Mystic and Yoga Divinity
3. Devotees Known as Shaivas
4. Shiva is Very Ambiguous, Ambivalent Figure
5. Devotees (Shivaites) Tend to Equate Shiva with Brahman of the Upanishads; Shiva is the Brahman of the Upanishads Personified
6. Shiva is Absolute, Unifies Opposites: God of Death, Destruction, Disease, but Also Reproduction, Sexuality, Fertility, and Dance; Unity of Positive and Negative, but Ultimately Shiva is Goodness
7. Favorite God of Hindu Ascetics
8. Shiva Accompanied by Retinue of Ghosts
9. Consorts of Shiva Also Popular
  - a. Shakti: Power, Phenomenal World, Eternal, Divine, Feminine, Goddess, Great Mother and Mistress
  - b. Kali: A Goddess More Terrible than Shiva Who is Both Time and Death; A Strange, Dark Goddess of Violence and Destruction; Path to True Wisdom Passes Through Her; Devotees Known as Shaktas
  - c. Paravati: Opposite of Kali, Feminine Goddess of Fertility, Perfect Wife/Mother

F. The Mixing of the Divine Families of Gods and Goddesses and the "Holy Trinity"

1. Many Stories bring Gods and Goddesses from Different Families Together
2. The Trimurti – the Particular Way that Gods are Understood
  - a. Brahma – the Creator
  - b. Vishnu – the Preserver
  - c. The Shiva (Rudra) the Destroyer

G. Devotionalism in the Meeting of Hinduism and Islam

1. Muslim Rulers at End of Middle Ages Bring Islam to India; Meeting of Islam and Hinduism Tends to Prompt Each to Become Defensive, Conservative, Preservationist
2. Some Muslims and Hindus Seek Accommodation and Mutual Learning
  - a. Rise of Wandering Ecstatic Devotees of a God Beyond Islam and Hinduism
  - b. The Poet Kabir (1440-1518 C.E.)
  - c. Nanak, Founder of Sikh Religion (1470-1540 C.E.) Advocated Worship of a God Beyond All Places and Faiths, Blends Bhaktic Hinduism and Islamic Concept of Submission to Personal, Sovereign God

H. Devotionalism in the Meeting of East and West

1. Ancient Religion in Modern World
2. Ramakrishna (1836-1886)

**X. The Practice of Hinduism Today**

- A. Temples
- B. Home Rites
- C. Weddings
- D. Funerals
- E. Caste
- F. Water
- G. Sadhus: Holy Men
- H. Festivals
- I. Cows
- J. Vegetarianism
- K. Ashrams and Swamis

**XI. Hinduism, Governance, and Political Life**

- A. Classical Concepts: Dharma and the Holy Kingship

1. Central Role of Holy Kingship from Warrior Caste
2. King Represents Hierarchical Order of all Reality
3. Swami Vivekananda (1862-1902 C.E.) Brings Ramakrishna's Message to the West, Making Vedantic Hinduism and Ramakrishna's Mysticism Intellectually Respectable

B. Hindu Nationalist Movements

1. National Identity of Hinduism Result of Muslim and British Rule
2. Reaction Against Secularization

C. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian Independence

1. Mohandas K. Gandhi
  - a. Religious Reformer Combines Traditional Hinduism with Christianity, Jainism, Islam, Parsi
  - b. Political Reformer, Training in England as Lawyer with Thoreau's Ideals of Civil Disobedience to Resist British Colonial Rule of India
  - c. Opposed Caste System, Called "Untouchables" the *Harijan*, "Children of God"
  - d. Unites Jainism's *ahimsa* and Karma-yoga
  - e. Advocates *satyagraha*, or Holding to/Fighting for Truth Non-Violently
  - f. Ascetic Discipline, Meditation, Ethos of Compassion Brought to Bear on Political Struggle

2. Independence from British Rule

- a. Partition with Islamic Pakistan; Much Bloodshed, Ethnic Cleansing, Death Results
- b. Secularization and Indian Democracy
- c. Continued Rivalry with Pakistan, Particularly over Sacred Sites, Temple-Mosque Sites, Kashmir
- d. Rise of Hindu Nationalism
- e. Conflicts between Sikhs and Indian Government

D. India Today: Tension, Change, and Promise

1. India World's Largest Democracy
2. Hindu-Muslim Conflict Continues

3. India is increasingly becoming a Global Economic Force with Economic Growth rates surpassed only by China
4. Hindus are fostering their inherent valuing of Holistic Self-Realization and Religious Pluralism
  - a. Serve as a Beacon for World Peace
  - b. Global Welfare

## **Women in Hinduism**

### **XII.**

- A. Celebratory Shiva Puja, the Temple, and Ritual spoke of Difficulty locating Hindu's Attitudes toward Women
  1. Men and Women waited in Long Lines for Blessings and the Red *Tilaka*.
  2. After the Blessing Women sat in the Place of Honor and Men sat in the Back
  3. Male and Female represented Everywhere in the Temple
  4. Hindu historically not kind to Women
- B. Sources of Classical Hindu Ideals of Womanhood
  1. The Rig-Veda Establishes the Family as the Central Component of Socio-Religious Structure of Hinduism
    - a. Women, Particularly in Upper Castes, Participate in Rituals and Have Relative Freedom within Patriarchy
    - b. Brahmana Texts Show Religion Becoming the Province of Male Priests Who Alone Perform Rituals
    - c. Education Primarily for Men, Women Stay at Home
    - d. Custom of Uneducated Women Marrying Older, Educated Men Puts Women into Lower Status
  2. The Ascetic Ideal of the Aranyakas and Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta Leads to Further Loss of Status for Women, Now Seen as Obstacle to Liberation
  3. Increasingly Hindu Texts Portray Women as Pervaded by Countless Vices and Faults
  4. Women's Lives Centered on and Completely Subordinate to Men's Lives in Law of Manu
- C. The Subordination of the Ideal Hindu Wife
  1. Married with At Least One Son
  2. Chaste, Humble, Devoted to Family and Husband to the Point of Self-Sacrifice

3. Wife Only Bathes, Eats, and Sleeps After Her Husband
4. Uneducated
5. Contributes to Three of the Four Goals of Husband: Provides Pleasure (kama), Assists his Gain (artha), Aids his Righteousness (dharma)
6. Woman's Goal: Fulfill Duties to Husband and Be Reincarnated as Male in the Next Life

D. The Subordination of the Ideal Hindu Wife

1. The Practice of Child Marriage
2. Purdah, Confining the Wife to Home and Veiling when Outside the Home (Common in Northern Regions Where there is Muslim Influence)
3. Bridal Family Dowry Racketeering and "Kitchen Accidents"
4. Women Not Allowed to Divorce or Remarry when Widowed
5. Widows Scorned Figures
6. Supreme Act of Devotion and Sacrifice of a Wife Exemplified in *Sati*

E. Places of Power and Participation

1. Actual Life for Women Does Not Always Match the Ideal Presented in the Brahminical Religious Texts
2. Equality for Women Tends to Increase as One Descends the Caste Hierarchy
3. Devotional (Bhakti) Religious Movements Also Undermine the Brahminical Ideal by Giving Women Opportunity for Sainthood
  - a. Many Devotional Gods are Male Figures, so Model Worshipper is Female
  - b. Many Popular Female Representations of the Divine in Hinduism, Which Gives Some Models for Empowerment and Self-Esteem to Women
  - c. Religious Narratives of Gods and Goddesses elevate Femaleness
  - d. Ganga, Ganges River Goddess, Nurtures and Sustains
  - e. Queens instrumental in Establishment of Temple and Education
4. Tantrism Reverses Many Social Roles, Offers Leadership Roles and Guru Status to Women

F. Women and Reform in India

1. British Generally Supported Traditional Hindu Patriarchal, Brahminical Ideal, Fostered Its Imposition on Lower Castes
2. Backlash Against British Results in Questioning Patriarchy
3. Women's Indian Association (Founded 1917) Pushes for Reforms Beyond What British Envisioned, Undermines Raj
4. New Indian Constitution of 1947 Contains Aspects Supporting Women's Rights
5. Eventually India Passes Legislation that:
  - a. Provided Equal Pay for Equal Work
  - b. Outlawed Polygamy
  - c. Raised Age of Marriage for Women to 18
  - d. Legalized Divorce
  - e. Provided Maternity Benefits
  - f. Prohibited Sexual Harassment
6. Implementing Reforms into Village Life a Challenge
  - a. Women Still Have Lower Literacy Rates
  - b. Dowry Murders and Female Infanticide Possible Causes of Continuing Decline in Ratio of Females to Males in India
  - c. Tradition of Ideal Hindu Wife Culturally Embedded

#### G. Today's Hindu Women

1. Low Status of Women is contrary to their Importance in Scripture and History
2. Patriarchal Systems imposed not by Hinduism but Superimposed Societal Customs
3. Hinduism Only Major World Religion recognizing the Divine in Female Form
4. Indian Secularist and Religious Hindus contributed to the Advancement of Women
5. Sarada Devi, Ramakrishna's wife, administer Mantras and is a Saint
6. Women Have Made Significant Progress in India as Prime Ministers, Spiritual Teachers, Saints, Swamis

#### H. Jainism

1. Mahavira Seen as Last in Series of Tirthankaras (Crossing-Makers) Who Achieved Moksha and Taught Others the Way
2. Jinas is a Victor/Conqueror; Jains Seek to Conquer Own Material Nature Through Asceticism
3. Asceticism Wears Down the Karmic Shell of Materiality So Soul Can Break Free and Float to Top of Universe

4. Jains Abhor Violence of All Kinds, and Seek to Live Utterly Non-Violent Lives that are Harmless (ahimsa)
5. Jains Today Prosperous Sub-Group in India

#### I. Sikhism

1. Nanak Teaches “True Name” of the One God and Simple Monotheism Attempting to Reconcile Spiritual Paths of Hindus and Muslims
2. The Sikh (“Disciple”) Worships Simply from Heart, without Concern for Caste, Creed, Ritual, Asceticism
3. Fifth Guru, Arjun (1563-1606 C.E.) Institutionalizes the Religion, Compiles the Granth, Sikh Scriptures
4. Tenth Guru, Gobind Rai (1666-1708 C.E.) Establishes Militarized Version of Sikhism
5. The Granth Becomes the Center of Sikhism

### **XIII. Hinduism in America**

#### A. India Comes to America

1. Swami Vivekananda Introduces Advaita Vedanta to America at The World Parliament of Religions (1893)
2. Vivekananda’s Vedanta Societies in America Paved Way for Other Varieties of Hinduism in America
3. Hindu Temples in America Oases for Orthodox Hindus, but also Welcome Seekers and Curious from Many Backgrounds

#### B. Other Hindu Influences in America

1. Emerson and Thoreau’s Writings Contained Hindu Ideas
2. Liberal Christianity, Judaism, and New Age Have Constructively Dialogued with Hinduism
3. The Popularity of Yoga in America

### **XIV. Fundamental Features of Hinduism**

#### A. Theoretical

1. Basic Worldview
  - a. Universe is Profoundly One
  - b. The Divine does not Change
2. God or Ultimate Reality
  - a. Brahman, One Mind or Life, is one Reality



- b. Essence is beyond Knowing
- 3. Origin and Destiny of the World
  - a. World goes through Endless Cycles of Creation and Destruction
  - b. There is no Beginning and no End
- 4. Origin of Human
  - a. Individual has no known Beginning
  - b. Humans go through Countless Lifetimes which is Determined by Karma
- 5. Destiny of Humans
  - a. Series of Lifetimes Continue
  - b. Cycles could include Episode in Heavens and Hells
  - c. One Transcends Karma Through God Realization
- 6. Revelation or Mediation between the Ultimate and the Human
  - a. Vedic Scriptures
  - b. Bhagavad-Gita
  - c. Brahmin Priesthood
  - d. Gods and God-Realized Saints as Expression of One
  - e. Following One's Guru as Spiritual Guide
- B. Practical: What is Expected of Humans, Worship, Practice, Behavior
  - 1. Follow Dharma through Rituals, Behavior, and Righteous Deeds
  - 2. If one Seeks Moksha, One Practices Yoga, Mediation, or Devotion under Guidance of Guru
- C. Major Sociological Institutions
  - 1. The Family
  - 2. Temples as Places of the Worship of the Gods and Goddesses
  - 3. Holy Men
  - 4. Brahmin Priesthood
  - 5. Caste System

### Key Names, Concepts, and Terms

Aryan  
Kshatriyas

Brahman  
prajna

artha  
kama

Shankara  
Ramanuja

avidya  
moksha

Brahmins	Vedanta	jnana-yoga	Sannyasin	dharma
Vaishyas	Law of Manu	karma-yoga	Ramakrishna	Puras
Shudras	Bhagavad Gita	Sarasvati	Vivekananda	Sadhus
Arjuna	Mahabharata	guru	Gandhi	Kali
Vedas	Tantrism	Bhakti-yoga	Karma	rita
Vishnu	Shiva/Shakti	ashramas	Ahimsa	Lakshmi
deus otiosus	yantra	Raja Yoga	Svadharma	Kundalini
Upanishads	Krishna	Vedanta	Maya	chakras
Kuma-Sutra	Monism	Monotheism	Reincarnation	Buddha
Monasticism	Mantra	Mandala	Avatar	

### Questions for Class Discussion

1. Over its long history Hinduism has demonstrated remarkable religious tolerance and flexibility, even to the point of advocating polytheism, monotheism, and monism all within a single religion. What are the implications of having such a flexible religious system? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
2. Many reformers from within and outside of the Hindu tradition have called for changes in the status of women, yet the traditional ideals of womanhood remain firmly entrenched in Indian society. To what extent is it possible and/or legitimate to tamper with social-religious practices and norms that date back thousands of years?
3. In the various strands of Hinduism we see an optimistic outlook on life and a pessimistic, world-denying outlook. Why do you think both of these outlooks are present in the religion? Can you see a similar mixture of positive and negative in any other world religion and/or philosophical system?

## Evaluation Questions

### Multiple Choice

1. Which is a stage of life (*ashrama*) in Hinduism?
  - A. Student
  - B. Guru
  - C. Yogi
  - D. Brahman
2. The goal of Hinduism can be summarized as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. dharma
  - B. lakshmi
  - C. moksha
  - D. varna
3. Which of the following Vedas is the oldest and most important hymn sung to the gods while sacrifices were made?
  - A. Sama Veda
  - B. Rig Veda
  - C. Yajur Veda
  - D. Artharva Veda
4. The word Veda means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. sacrifice
  - B. ritual
  - C. prayer
  - D. knowledge
5. What is the goal of the yogi?
  - A. niyama
  - B. yama
  - C. kaivalya
  - D. pranayama
6. The web of vibrations that are in tune with the gods and the subtle currents of reality are called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. vedas
  - B. mandala
  - C. mantras
  - D. tapas
7. The Bhagavad Gita, an epic poem, is about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a great flood

- B. the creation of the world
  - C. a great battle
  - D. the coming of Lakshmi at the end of time
8. One path which Hindu devotees may follow is called bhakti, which is the way of \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. asceticism
  - B. knowledge
  - C. devotion
  - D. pleasure
9. The medieval philosopher \_\_\_\_\_ is known as the developer of the Advaita Vedanta system and a prime opponent of Indian Buddhism.
- A. Shankara
  - B. Gandhi
  - C. Vivekananda
  - D. Shiva
10. The caste system \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. has roots in vedic literature
  - B. developed into its modern form in the seventh century C.E.
  - C. was outlawed by India's constitution in 1948
  - D. all of the above

### **True/False**

- 11. Unlike many other world religions, Hinduism has no single identifiable founder.
- 12. Today the Vedic texts are widely read and studied by the average Hindu.
- 13. The Upanishads proscribe rituals and sacrifices performed by priests as the primary means of devotion.
- 14. Vivekananda met with great success in his efforts to introduce devotional Hinduism into America.
- 15. Vishnu is the god of death, destruction, and disease.

### **Fill in the Blank**

- 16. The goddess \_\_\_\_\_ is the wife of Vishnu.
- 17. The god \_\_\_\_\_ unifies opposites.
- 18. In the Upanishads, \_\_\_\_\_ is the One Reality.

19. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna is the incarnation of \_\_\_\_\_.
20. The religious text known as \_\_\_\_\_ teaches a four-part varna system of social stratification that develops into the Hindu caste system.

### Matching

Match the terms to their proper definition or example; the same term might apply to more than one definition or example.

A. Brahma      B. Shiva      C. Vishnu      D. Kali

21. This deity is the terrible, strange, and dark master of time and death, violence, and destruction.
22. This deity is the creator who emerged from the navel of another deity.
23. This deity's wife is Lakshmi, Goddess of fertility, wealth, and victory.
24. This deity is the favorite god of Hindu ascetics.
25. This deity comes to earth in different incarnations (avatars) to assist humans.

### Essay Questions

26. Explain how Hinduism has reconciled the “affirmative way” in religion—the way of moving toward unconditioned reality through devotion to the divine images and ideas— and the “negative way”—the way to God by taking away all that is not God, all lesser images and ideas. Give examples of each way from the reading.
27. Discuss the view of human life indicated by Hinduism's four goals and four stages of life.
28. Present the main features of Vedic religion: its worldview, its gods, the inner meaning of its sacrifices, and how it set the stage for the development of later Hindu philosophy and religion.
29. Discuss the Hindu philosophical tradition known as Vedanta. Explain the ideas of Shankara and the ways in which Ramajuna later challenged his system. Discuss the thinkers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who keep this system alive and present it to the world as the essence of true Hinduism.
30. Discuss the ways in which Hinduism has led to the subjugation of women in Indian society, and the ways in which Hinduism, past and present, contains resources for the empowering of women and fostering egalitarian status for them.

**Answer Key for Evaluation Questions**

Multiple Choice:

1. A    2. C    3. B    4. D    5. C    6. C    7. C    8. C    9. A    10. D

True/False:

11. True        12. False        13. False        14. False        15. False

Fill in the Blank:

16. Lakshmi    17. Shiva        18. Brahman    19. Vishnu        20. Law of Manu

Matching:

21. D    22. B        23. C        24. B    25. C