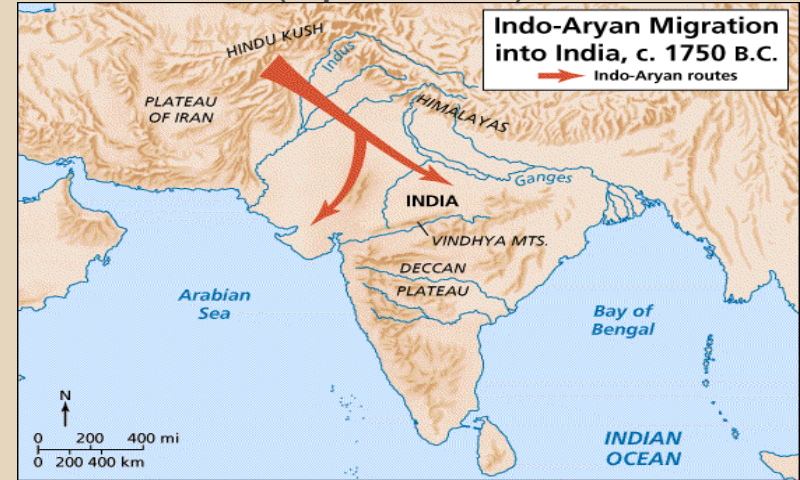


Hinduism



Foundation of Hinduism

- Not one single founder, at the beginning the teachings were orally spoken.
- Nomadic cattle-herding tribes (Aryans) from Central Asia moved into northern India 3,000 years ago.
- Brought religious teaching, Vedas, which blended with the religious beliefs of early Indian Villagers which led to their religious records (Upanishad).
- Went from polytheism to a somewhat form of monotheism (Bhakti).



The Vedic Period (c.1500-c.500BCE)

In ancient times of hinduism “Vedas”

- Focused on sacrifice and sacred meals for many gods.

Transition from “Vedas” to “Upanishad”

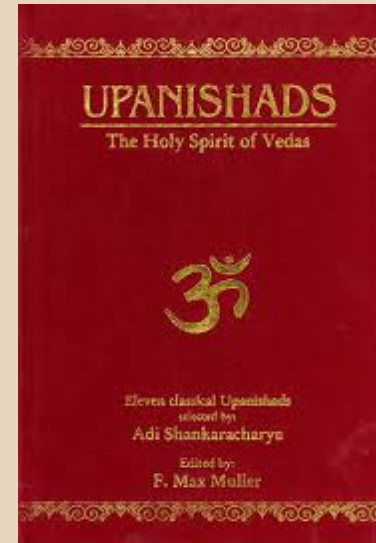
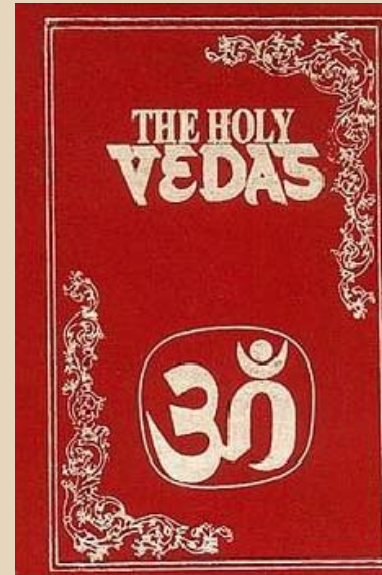
- 2 epics “Mahabharata” and “Ramayana”

- Focus on Atman and Brahman

- Dharma

- Karma & Reincarnation

- Moksha & Samsara



Upanishad (Major Beliefs)

Atman & Brahman

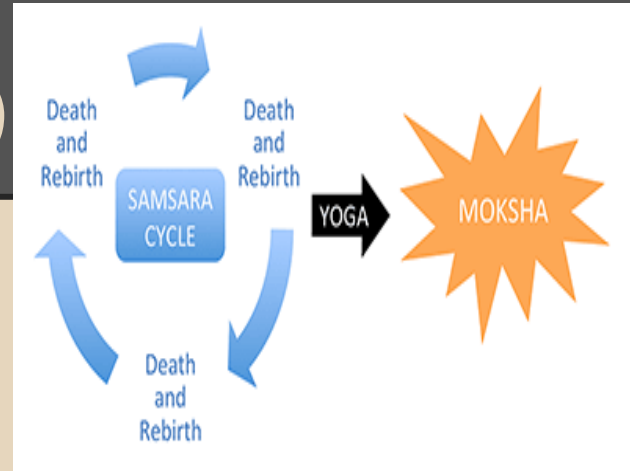
- Atman: “individual soul”
- Brahman: “world’s soul”
- Individual soul is the world’s soul.

Karma & Reincarnation

- After death you will be reborn, but how you lived your first life will determine how you live your next.

Moksha & Samsara

- Ultimate goal; escape from the cycle of life, death, and rebirth, and to remerge with Brahman (Samsara).
- Escape from the cycle is moksha “release”.



Upanishad Epics



Both written in Sanskrit during Gupta dynasty.

“Mahabharata”:

-Focused on Dharma, natural universal law, as well as the struggle between good and evil.

-It questioned: If it matters if a person is actively trying to change the world or is everything fated to be the way it is.

“Ramayana”:

-Depicts the duties of relationships; what is the ideal father, king, wife, brother, and servant.

-Focused on loyalty.

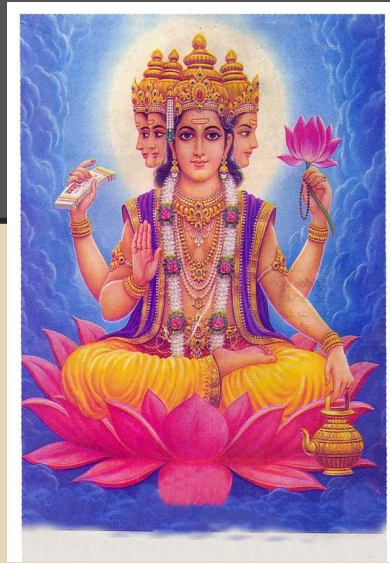
Polytheism vs. Bhakti

Hinduism polytheism:

- More practiced in ancient times
- Brahma: Creator
- Vishnu: Preserver
- Shiva: Destroyer



Vishnu



Brahma



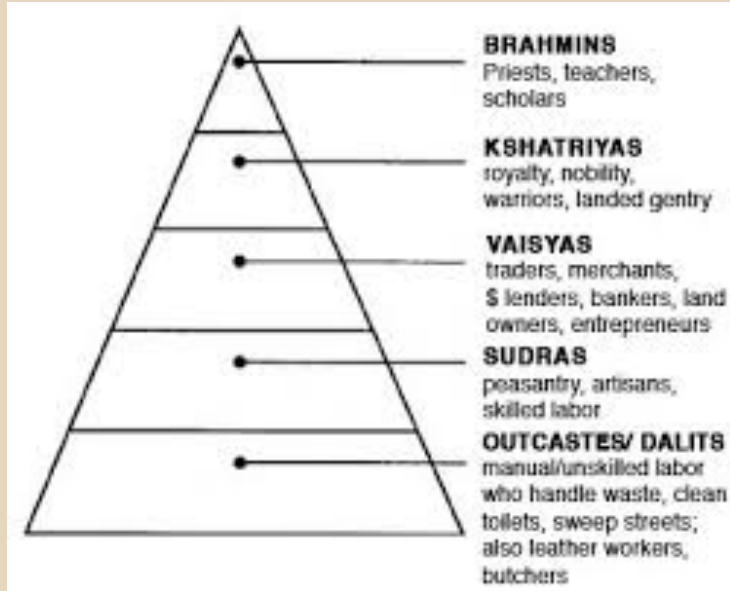
Shiva

Bhakti: devotion to one god, there can be many bhakti cults for different gods.

- Gradual change from polytheism to bhakti.
- More modernly used today.
- Major bhakti deity is Brahma.

Hindu Caste System

Originally Hindus defined by Purity
-Very strict social roles.



Changes:

- Subgroups developed, Jati, specialize in certain occupations. Today 5 -15 thousand groups.
- 1950, law passed saying, no more discrimination against untouchables.
- Not as strict

Similarities:

- Still have morals or behaviors for each caste system, and rules for marriage.

Turning Points

- Brahmins of Vedic times (1500-500 B.C.E.) conducted large public ceremonies of animals sacrifices, and the Brahmins of Gupta era, (320-600 C.E.) gave non sacrificial offerings to Vishnu and Shiva temples.
- Originally practiced in ones household. Today mostly worshiped in temples.
- Focus on individual actions to achieve liberation, focusing on prayer, rejection of possession, and strict self denial.
- Emphasize to the devotion of one of the gods or goddesses (Bhakti)
- Caste system.



Comparisons: Ancient vs Modern

Differences:

- “Vedas” to “Upanishad”
- Bhakti, main focus on Brahma
- No more animal or human sacrifices.
- Don't eat meat, believe a cow is sacred.
- Caste system less strict now than before.

Similarities:

- Still do not recognize one founder.
- Still taught out of “Vedas”.
- Same endless cycle reincarnation, eternal life.
- Still not one founder.
- Morals of caste systems and rules of marriage.

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