

Hinduism and Buddhism

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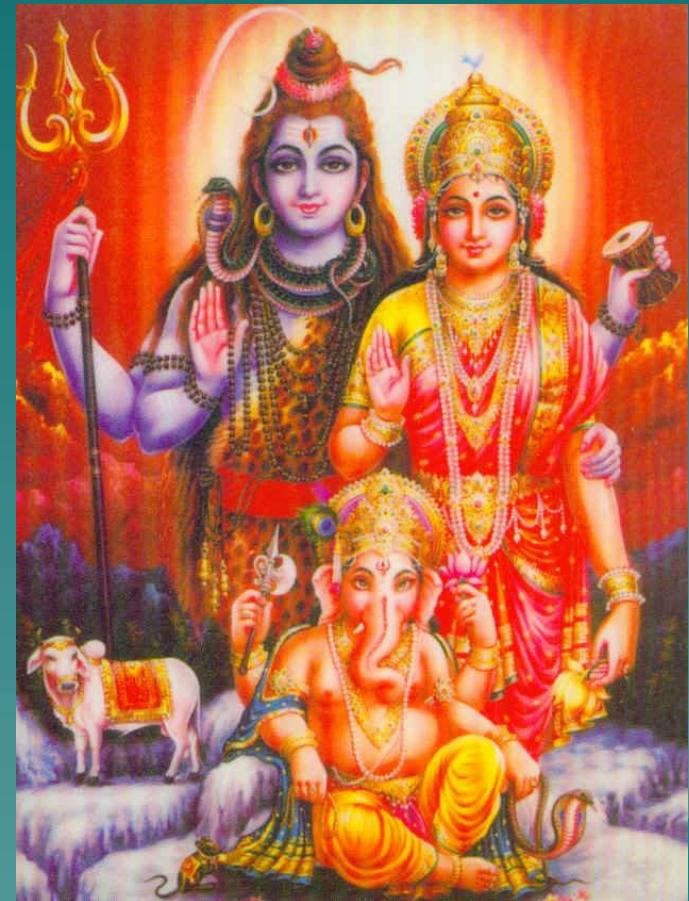
1. What are the main beliefs of Hinduism?
2. What are the main beliefs of Buddhism?

Hinduism – Background Information

- ◆ Hinduism is a polytheistic religion that started in India.
- ◆ Sacred Texts: *Vedas, Ramayana, Bhagavad-Gita*
- ◆ There is no single founder of the religion.
 - Hindu beliefs are a combination of the beliefs of the early Indus Valley peoples and the Aryans. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImV2Wd8bOcc>

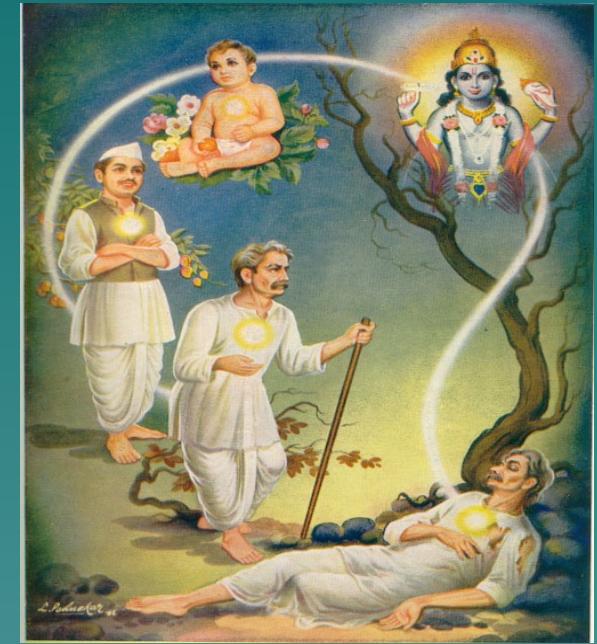
Hindu Gods

- ◆ **Polytheistic:** Hindus believe in many gods; gods can be in many forms, including animals and humans;
- ◆ Brahma - the Creator
- ◆ Vishnu - the Preserver
- ◆ Shiva - the Destroyer



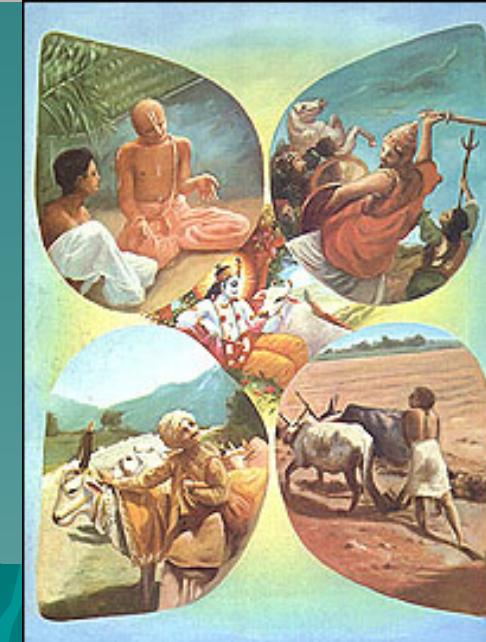
Main Beliefs of Hinduism

- ◆ **Reincarnation:** after death, souls are reborn into another form; reincarnation is determined by karma and dharma;
- ◆ **Ahimsa:** moral principle of nonviolence; Hindus believe that all things are aspects of brahman, therefore they should be respected;

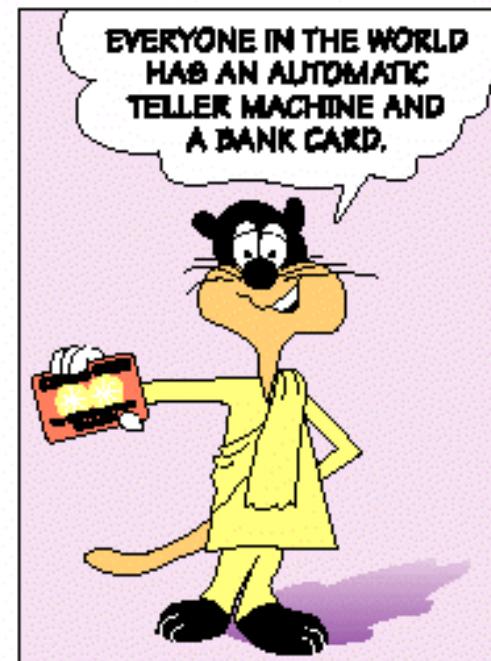
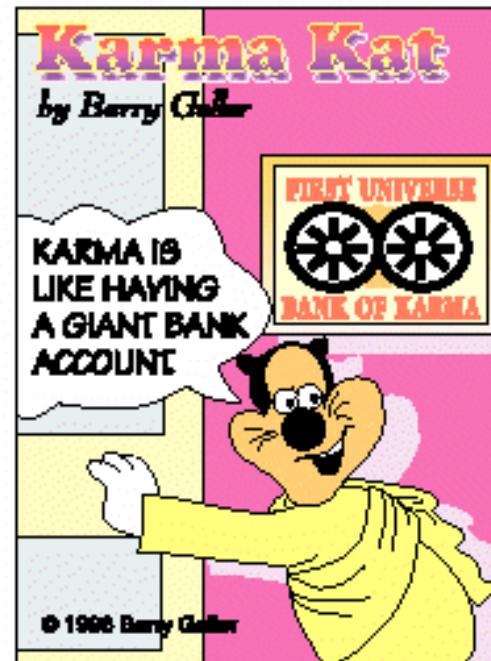


Main Beliefs of Hinduism

- ◆ **Karma:** all the actions of a person's life that affects his or her fate in the next life;
 - People who earn a good karma are reborn at a higher level of existence;
- ◆ **Dharma:** the religious and moral duties of an individual; duties vary according to class, occupation, gender or age;
 - by obeying one's dharma, a person acquires merit for the next life



Karma = actions
Dharma = duties

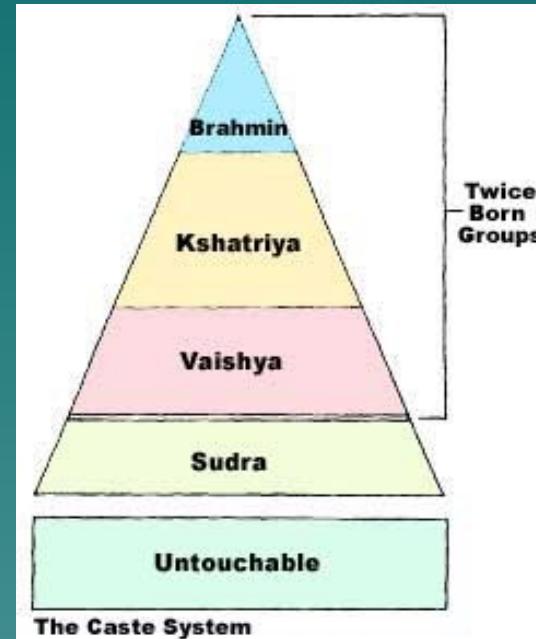


If you obey your dharma and have good karma you will be reincarnated to achieve moksha.



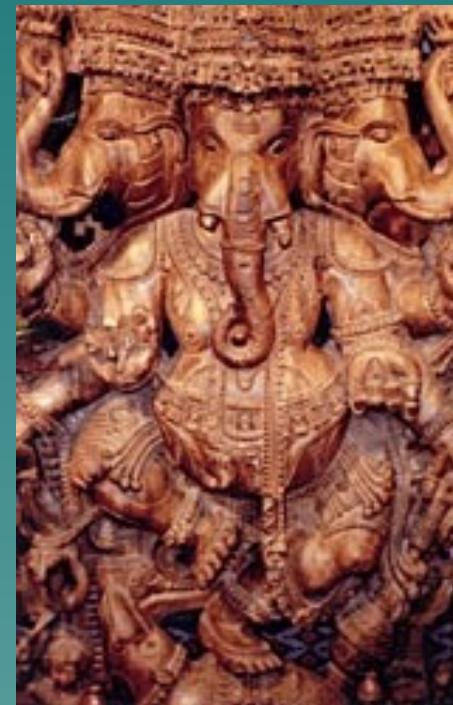
How does the caste system influence Hindu beliefs?

- ◆ **Caste System = social classes into which you are born and cannot change;**
 - after death, Hindus hope to be reincarnated into a higher caste;
 - each caste has its own dharma;



Sacred Animals / Rivers:

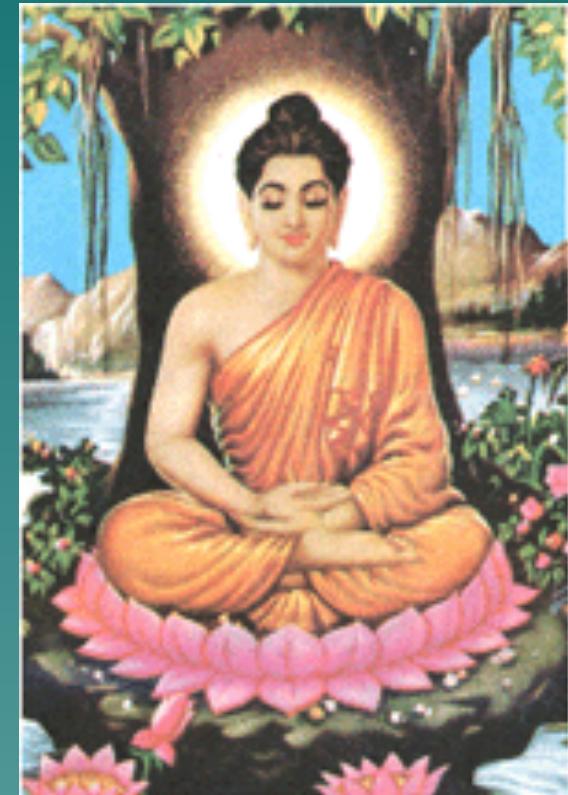
- ◆ cows, elephants and other animals are viewed as sacred; the Ganges River is the most sacred river to Hindus;



Buddhism –
Background Information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lxq-RiLb-6M>

- ◆ **Buddhism started in India by the “Buddha,” or Siddartha Gautama**
- ◆ **Founder: Siddartha Gautama = an Indian prince who sought to eliminate suffering and devoted his life to achieving nirvana;**



Main Beliefs of Buddhism

- ◆ **Karma**
- ◆ **Dharma**
- ◆ **Reincarnation**
- ◆ **Buddhists believe in NO GODS;**
 - the Buddha was not normally viewed as a god;

Main Beliefs of Buddhism

Eightfold Path / Middle Way

**“the right way;”
making the right
decisions,
actions, effort,
etc.**

1. Right View	Wisdom
2. Right Intention	
3. Right Speech	
4. Right Action	Ethical Conduct
5. Right Livelihood	
6. Right Effort	
7. Right Mindfulness	Mental Development
8. Right Concentration	

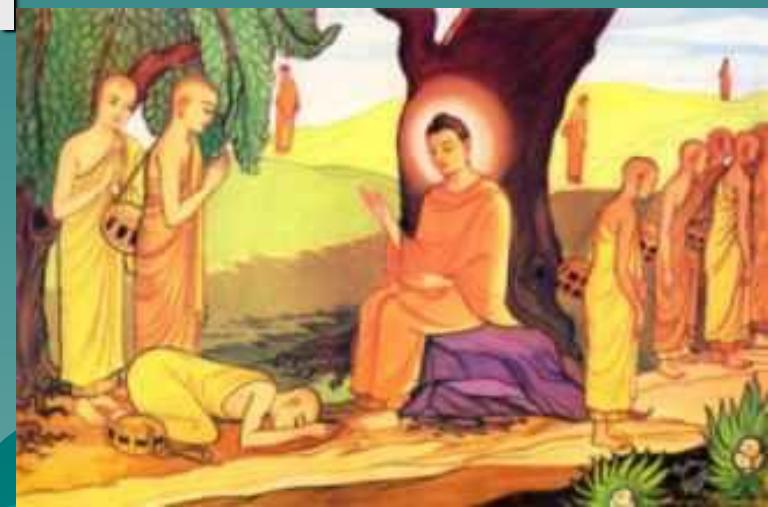
Main Beliefs of Buddhism

- ◆ **Four Noble Truths** =
- ◆ Life is full of suffering
- ◆ Suffering is caused by desire
- ◆ Eliminate suffering by eliminating desire
- ◆ Eliminate desire by following the Eightfold Path / Middle Way

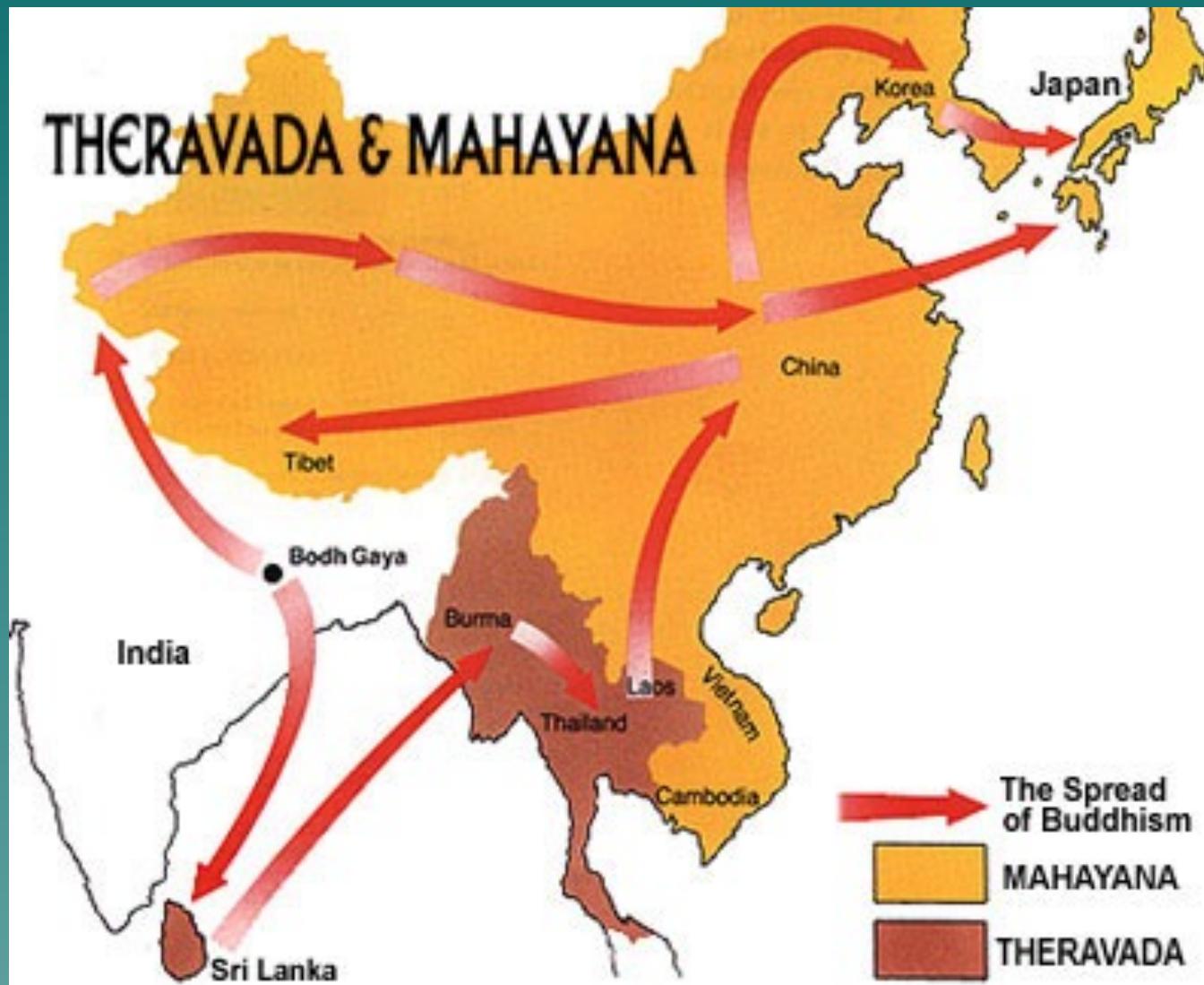


Main Beliefs of Buddhism

- ◆ **Buddhists do not believe in the caste system;**
Buddhists believe that anyone, at any time, can achieve nirvana;
- ◆ **Nirvana = the goal of every Buddhist; spiritual enlightenment;**
- ◆ **Ahimsa = NON-VIOLENCE**



Spread of Buddhism



Exit Ticket

- ◆ Identify TWO DIFFERENCES in beliefs between Hinduism & Buddhism

BuddhaNet Basic Buddhism Guide

A Five Minute Introduction

• What is Buddhism?

Buddhism is a religion to about 300 million people around the world. The word comes from 'budhi', 'to awaken'. It has its origins about 2,500 years ago when Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, was himself awakened (enlightened) at the age of 35.

• Is Buddhism a Religion?

To many, Buddhism goes beyond religion and is more of a philosophy or 'way of life'. It is a philosophy because philosophy 'means love of wisdom' and the Buddhist path can be summed up as:

- (1) to lead a moral life,
- (2) to be mindful and aware of thoughts and actions, and
- (3) to develop wisdom and understanding.

• How Can Buddhism Help Me?

Buddhism explains a purpose to life, it explains apparent injustice and inequality around the world, and it provides a code of or way of life that leads to true happiness.

• Why is Buddhism Becoming Popular?

Buddhism is becoming popular in western countries for a number of reasons. The first good reason is Buddhism has answers to many of the problems in modern materialistic societies. It also includes (for those who are interested) a deep understanding of the human mind (and natural therapies) which prominent psychologists around the world are now discovering to be both very advanced and effective.

• Who Was the Buddha?

Siddhartha Gotama was born into a royal family in Lumbini, now located in Nepal, in 563 BC. At 29, he realised that wealth and luxury did not guarantee happiness, so he explored the different teachings religions and philosophies of the day, to find the key to human happiness. After six years of study and meditation he finally found 'the middle path' and was enlightened. After enlightenment, the Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching the principles of Buddhism — called the Dhamma, or Truth — until his death at the age of 80.

• Was the Buddha a God?

He was not, nor did he claim to be. He was a man who taught a path to enlightenment from his own experience.

• Do Buddhists Worship Idols?

Buddhists sometimes pay respect to images of the Buddha, not in worship, nor to ask for favours. A statue of the Buddha with hands rested gently in its lap and a compassionate smile reminds us to strive to develop peace and love within ourselves. Bowing to the statue is an expression of gratitude for the teaching.

• Why are so Many Buddhist Countries Poor?

One of the Buddhist teachings is that wealth does not guarantee happiness and also wealth is impermanent. The people of every country suffer whether rich or poor, but those who understand Buddhist teachings can find true happiness.

- **Are There Different Types of Buddhism?**

There are many different types of Buddhism, because the emphasis changes from country to country due to customs and culture. What does not vary is the essence of the teaching — the Dhamma or truth.

- **Are Other Religions Wrong?**

Buddhism is also a belief system which is tolerant of all other beliefs or religions. Buddhism agrees with the moral teachings of other religions but Buddhism goes further by providing a long term purpose within our existence, through wisdom and true understanding. Real Buddhism is very tolerant and not concerned with labels like 'Christian', 'Moslem', 'Hindu' or 'Buddhist'; that is why there have never been any wars fought in the name of Buddhism. That is why Buddhists do not preach and try to convert, only explain if an explanation is sought.

- **Is Buddhism Scientific?**

Science is knowledge which can be made into a system, which depends upon seeing and testing facts and stating general natural laws. The core of Buddhism fit into this definition, because the Four Noble truths (see below) can be tested and proven by anyone in fact the Buddha himself asked his followers to test the teaching rather than accept his word as true. Buddhism depends more on understanding than faith.

- **What did the Buddha Teach?**

The Buddha taught many things, but the basic concepts in Buddhism can be summed up by the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

- **What is the First Noble Truth?**

The first truth is that life is suffering i.e., life includes pain, getting old, disease, and ultimately death. We also endure psychological suffering like loneliness frustration, fear, embarrassment, disappointment and anger. This is an irrefutable fact that cannot be denied. It is realistic rather than pessimistic because pessimism is expecting things to be bad. Instead, Buddhism explains how suffering can be avoided and how we can be truly happy.

- **What is the Second Noble Truth?**

The second truth is that suffering is caused by craving and aversion. We will suffer if we expect other people to conform to our expectation, if we want others to like us, if we do not get something we want,etc. In other words, getting what you want does not guarantee happiness. Rather than constantly struggling to get what you want, try to modify your wanting. Wanting deprives us of contentment and happiness. A lifetime of wanting and craving and especially the craving to continue to exist, creates a powerful energy which causes the individual to be born. So craving leads to physical suffering because it causes us to be reborn.

- **What is the Third Noble Truth?**

The third truth is that suffering can be overcome and happiness can be attained; that true happiness and contentment are possible. If we give up useless craving and learn to live each day at a time (not dwelling in the past or the imagined future) then we can become happy and free. We then have more time and energy to help others. This is Nirvana.

- **What is the Fourth Noble Truth?**

The fourth truth is that the Noble 8-fold Path is the path which leads to the end of suffering.

- **What is the Noble 8-Fold Path?**

In summary, the Noble 8-fold Path is being moral (through what we say, do and our livelihood), focussing the mind on being fully aware of our thoughts and actions, and developing wisdom by understanding the Four Noble Truths and by developing compassion for others.

• What are the 5 Precepts?

The moral code within Buddhism is the precepts, of which the main five are: not to take the life of anything living, not to take anything not freely given, to abstain from sexual misconduct and sensual overindulgence, to refrain from untrue speech, and to avoid intoxication, that is, losing mindfulness.

• What is Karma?

Karma is the law that every cause has an effect, i.e., our actions have results. This simple law explains a number of things: inequality in the world, why some are born handicapped and some gifted, why some live only a short life. Karma underlines the importance of all individuals being responsible for their past and present actions. How can we test the karmic effect of our actions? The answer is summed up by looking at (1) the intention behind the action, (2) effects of the action on oneself, and (3) the effects on others.

• What is Wisdom?

Buddhism teaches that wisdom should be developed with compassion. At one extreme, you could be a good hearted fool and at the other extreme, you could attain knowledge without any emotion. Buddhism uses the middle path to develop both. The highest wisdom is seeing that in reality, all phenomena are incomplete, impermanent and do not constitute a fixed entity. True wisdom is not simply believing what we are told but instead experiencing and understanding truth and reality. Wisdom requires an open, objective, unbogged mind. The Buddhist path requires courage, patience, flexibility and intelligence.

• What is Compassion?

Compassion includes qualities of sharing, readiness to give comfort, sympathy, concern, caring. In Buddhism, we can really understand others, when we can really understand ourselves, through wisdom.

Hinduism: Basic Beliefs

The fundamental teaching of Hinduism, or Vedanta, is that a human being's basic nature is not confined to the body or the mind. Beyond both of these is the spirit or the spark of God within the soul.

How did Hinduism begin?

Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma ("eternal spiritual path") began about 4000 years ago in India. It was the religion of an ancient people known as the Aryans ("noble people") whose philosophy, religion, and customs are recorded in their sacred texts known as the Vedas. These texts were initially handed down by word of mouth from teacher to student. It was not until much later that they were actually written down. Archeological evidence from the Indus Valley civilization of northwestern India helps to establish Hinduism as the world's oldest living religion. Today, worldwide, there are almost one billion people professing some aspect of Hinduism. The fundamental teachings of Hinduism, which form the foundation of all its different sects, are contained in the concluding portion of the Vedas, and are therefore known as the Vedanta (the "end or concluding portion of the Vedas"). This part of the Vedas is also known as the Upanishads.

What do Hindus believe and practice?

The fundamental teaching of Hinduism, or Vedanta, is that a human being's basic nature is not confined to the body or the mind. Beyond both of these is the spirit or the spark of God within the soul. This spirit is within us and also within everything we see. All beings and all things are really, in their deepest essence, this pure or divine spirit, full of peace, full of joy and wisdom, ever united with God. This is not just theory, but it can actually be experienced. Anyone who takes the trouble to undergo the necessary training to purify and refine the mind and senses can begin to feel the truth of this. This training can take various forms and is known as yoga ("union"- union of the individual self with this inner spirit).

There are four main types of yoga, meant for the four main types of human temperaments:

Karma Yoga or the discipline of right actions is for those of active temperament, striving to eliminate selfishness, and to cultivate universal sympathy by seeing the divine reality in all.

Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion to God whose presence can be felt in all things. God can be worshipped as present in an image in a Temple. God can be worshipped also as present in suffering humanity by service.

Jnana Yoga, preferred by those of analytical bent of mind, is the discipline of trying to see the divine reality within all things directly, by mentally brushing aside all the obstructing physical and mental coverings that hide it.

Raja Yoga is the process of mental control, purity, and meditation to make the mind very calm and quiet. In that profound quiet, the inner divine light reveals itself.

What are the manifestation(s) God in Hinduism?

What are the different sects of Hinduism? The general name for God in Hinduism is Brahman. The name of the divine essence within us is Atman. They are one and the same, infinite and eternal. However, God is also present in all creation. God's manifestation in creation goes by many names. It is the one infinite, eternal, Divine Being that is manifesting in countless ways. It is like a person at the same time being called "father" by his son, "friend" by his friend, "son" by his own father, "husband" by his wife, etc. A special relationship goes with each name. So the same Divine Lord has been addressed as Shiva, Vishnu, etc and as Divine Mother, Kali, Durga, etc. God can also manifest as an extraordinary being in human form, who is then known as an incarnation of God, such as Krishna, Rama, etc. Since it is the one infinite God alone that is being looked at in different ways, all these manifestations can be prayed to for help and protection. This is the underlying principle behind all the different sects of Hinduism. Those who prefer a particular manifestation of the divinity will form a sect devoted to the contemplation and worship of that manifestation. All the sects, however, will accept the ancient teachings of the Vedas and the Vedanta as the foundation of their practice.

What is reincarnation?

In this world every cause must have its effect. We are responsible for the results of our actions. Long ages ago, human beings first asked themselves, why are some people born in happy circumstances, whereas others are born to suffer all their lives? The events of this present life are not enough to account for such suffering. To reasonably explain an excess of suffering or of enjoyment in this life, it was assumed that we all have had previous existences, and that we are now reaping the results of those previous actions. It must also be true then that we can take charge of our destiny right now. We can create a better tomorrow by resolving to do better actions today. However, as long as desires remain in the mind, the tendency toward rebirth will exist.

What is Maya?

In this life we do not see things very clearly. We are constantly faced with contradictions. Though we know what is right, we have trouble doing it. Our thoughts soar high, but our actions cannot rise to the level of our thoughts. The world is full of misery and injustice; as quickly as we remove some, more seems to rush in to take its place. We are told by the saints, and we also feel, that a loving God is at work in this creation, but we cannot reconcile this with what we see around us. This complex situation in which we find ourselves is called Maya.

The way out of this, according to Hinduism or Vedanta, is that we are not really seeing the world properly. If we saw it properly, we would see that it is God alone before us. Instead, we superimpose all this complex world on that divine reality.

The illustration given is that of a rope, mistaken in semi-darkness for a snake. The snake of this world frightens us. What is the solution? Bring a light and you will see its real nature. It is only a rope. Likewise, the real nature or essence of this world is divinity alone. Bring the light of spiritual wisdom through yoga, and you will see God alone everywhere. This is what constitutes spiritual freedom or liberation, Moksha. When this knowledge dawns, there is complete satisfaction; no desire remains in the mind, and no further impulse for rebirth remains.

What code of behavior do Hindus follow?

The code of behavior is one's dharma. This is determined by the place in society and the duties associated with it. There are four main social positions or varna; Brahmins (priests and teachers) Kshatriyas (rulers and soldiers), Vaishyas (merchants) and Shudras (workers).

There are four ideal stages of life described in Hindu scriptures: the student, the family man, the recluse, and the wandering holy man. For most Hindu people these represent a metaphorical path, not an actual path.

What are the Hindu sacred texts?

Hindu ancient, sacred texts were written in Sanskrit, the language of ancient India.

The **Vedas** are the oldest - about 3000 years old. They are a collection of hymns, prayers, and magic spells. The **Upanishads** are stories and parables told by gurus (teachers) to their students. The **Mahabharata** is a story of a war between two royal families.

The **Bhagavad Gita** is a very popular part of this text. The **Ramayana** is a story of the god Rama and the rescue of his wife Sita from Ravana, the evil demon king.