

# **Tenets of Hinduism**

**Professor Raman Gokal**

# HINDUISM - What is it?

- **Generally accepted as a generic term to identify the 'religious' practices of the people of India.**
- **“...unlike other religions, does not claim any one prophet, does not worship any one God, does not subscribe to any one dogma or book, does not believe in any one concept, does not follow any one set of religious rites. It may be broadly described as a way of life and nothing more”  
Supreme Court of India Dec 1995**
- **Way of life consists of religious, spiritual, cultural, moral, ethical aspects.**

# Hinduism

- Difficult to define
- No one prophet
- Does not worship any one God
- Does not subscribe to any one dogma
- Does not believe in any one philosophy
- Does not have any one book
- Based on experience
  - not a revealed religion
  - it is an experienced religion
- A way of life –spiritual, cultural, moral and ethical

# Hindu Religious Philosophy

- Hinduism
  - not a revealed religion
  - it is an experienced religion
- “Know thy Self, inquire within and be free”

It answers fundamental questions:

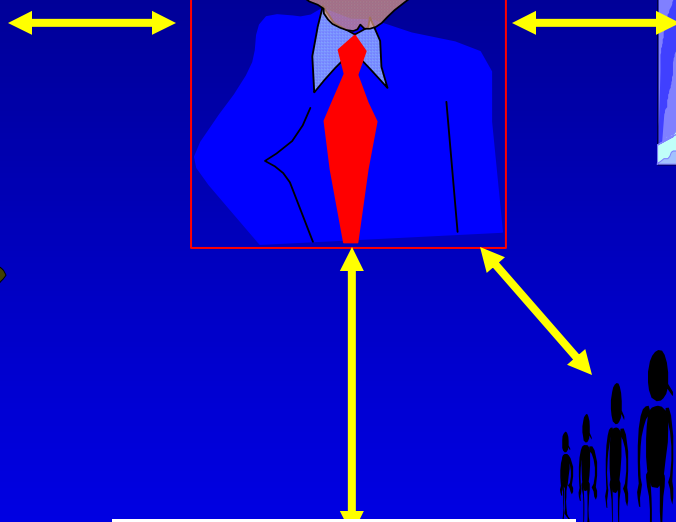
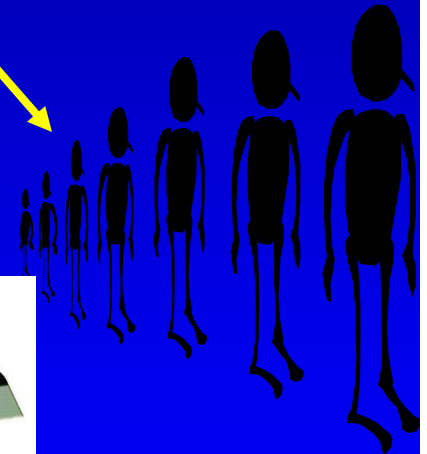
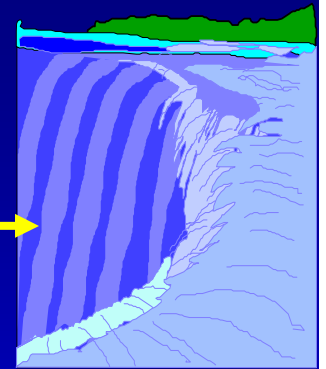
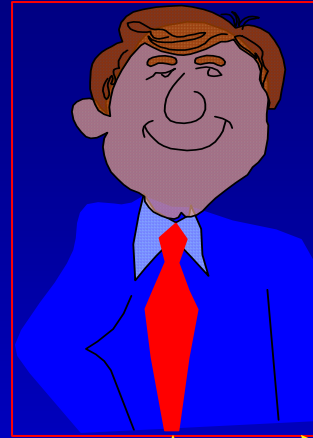
- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Where am I going?
- What is my path?

# Tenets of Hinduism

Harmony  
In  
Diversity  
Unity

Within oneself  
With others

**With GOD**



# **HINDUISM**

## **Basic Tenet**

**Firm belief of individuality of intelligence**

**All are equal**

**Everyone can search for GOD according to his or her intellect**

**Multitude of paths**

**“Just as there is no end to the multitude of paths in the sky by which the birds fly or fish swim in water, As many birds and fish with their many ways, So similarly is the pursuit of Truth”**

# Hindu View of Life

## Journey of Life

Vedic  
Principles  
(knowledge)

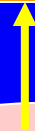


Blind  
Worship  
(faith)

**Self Realisation  
Truth/Moksha**



**karma  
birth/death  
ignorance/desire**



**Soul/self**





**Supreme act of renunciation and the longing for inner enlightenment.**



# Hinduism through Milleniums

- Ancient India was more central to origins of civilisation than is presently considered
- This is derived from Vedic literature
  - \* Rig Veda - oldest of the Vedic texts - portrays life >3000 years ago; calendar based on astronomical sightings
    - winter solstice when sun rises in Revati nakshatra (Aries)
    - only possible in 6000 BC
  - \* Vedic Saraswati River - existence and extent now proven by modern research and NASA photographs
  - \* Archaeological findings in Kunal - writings and silvercraft dating from 6000-4000BC
  - \* Vedic hymns portray the practice of Yoga and meditation
- Indicates a profound spiritual culture existing at dawn of human history

# Hindu Timeline

- **7000yrs BC** - farming village at Mehrgarh
- **6500yrs BC** - composition of early Vedic hymns (Rig Veda verse on winter solstice)
- **5000yrs BC** - beginning of Indus valley civilisation.
  - Reaches a height 3700BC and continues till 1700BC

# Hindu Timeline

- **4000BC** - reign of Puranic kings begins
- **3167 BC** - Manu Vaivasvata “father of mankind” -first of Puranic kings
- **3100BC** - traditional Hindu calendar starts
- **2050BC** - Lord Rama
- **1500BC** - Krishna, Mahabharata, Gita
- **600BC** - Buddhism
- **0** - Birth of Christ

# The Aryan Invasion Theory – no longer a controversy

- This theory, originally devised by F. Max Muller in 1848, traces the history of Hinduism to the invasion of India's indigenous people by lighter skinned Aryans around 1500 BCE. The theory was reinforced by other research over the next 120 years, and became the accepted history of Hinduism.

There is now ample evidence to show that Muller, and those who followed him, were wrong.

- Why is the theory no longer accepted?

The Aryan invasion theory was based on archaeological, linguistic and ethnological evidence. Later research has discredited this evidence, Modern historians of the area no longer believe that such invasions had such great influence on Indian history.

- It's now generally accepted that Indian history shows a continuity of progress from the earliest times to today. The changes brought to India by other cultures are not denied by modern historians, but they are no longer thought to be a major ingredient in the development of Hinduism.

- Dangers of the theory

The Aryan invasion theory denies the Indian origin of India's predominant culture, but gives the credit for Indian culture to invaders from elsewhere.

It even teaches that some of the most revered books of Hindu scripture are not actually Indian, and it devalues India's culture by portraying it as less ancient than it actually is.

# History - Modern Vedanta

## Dayanand Saraswati

>5000 years ARYAS - sovereign rulers

Vedas and Upanishads (Maitri Upanishad 1.4)

Mahabharata - Great War - kings, sages and seers killed  
Knowledge → Vedic religious influence

Jealousy hatred vanity ego

Brahmins and priests (ignorant, deceitful, irreligious)

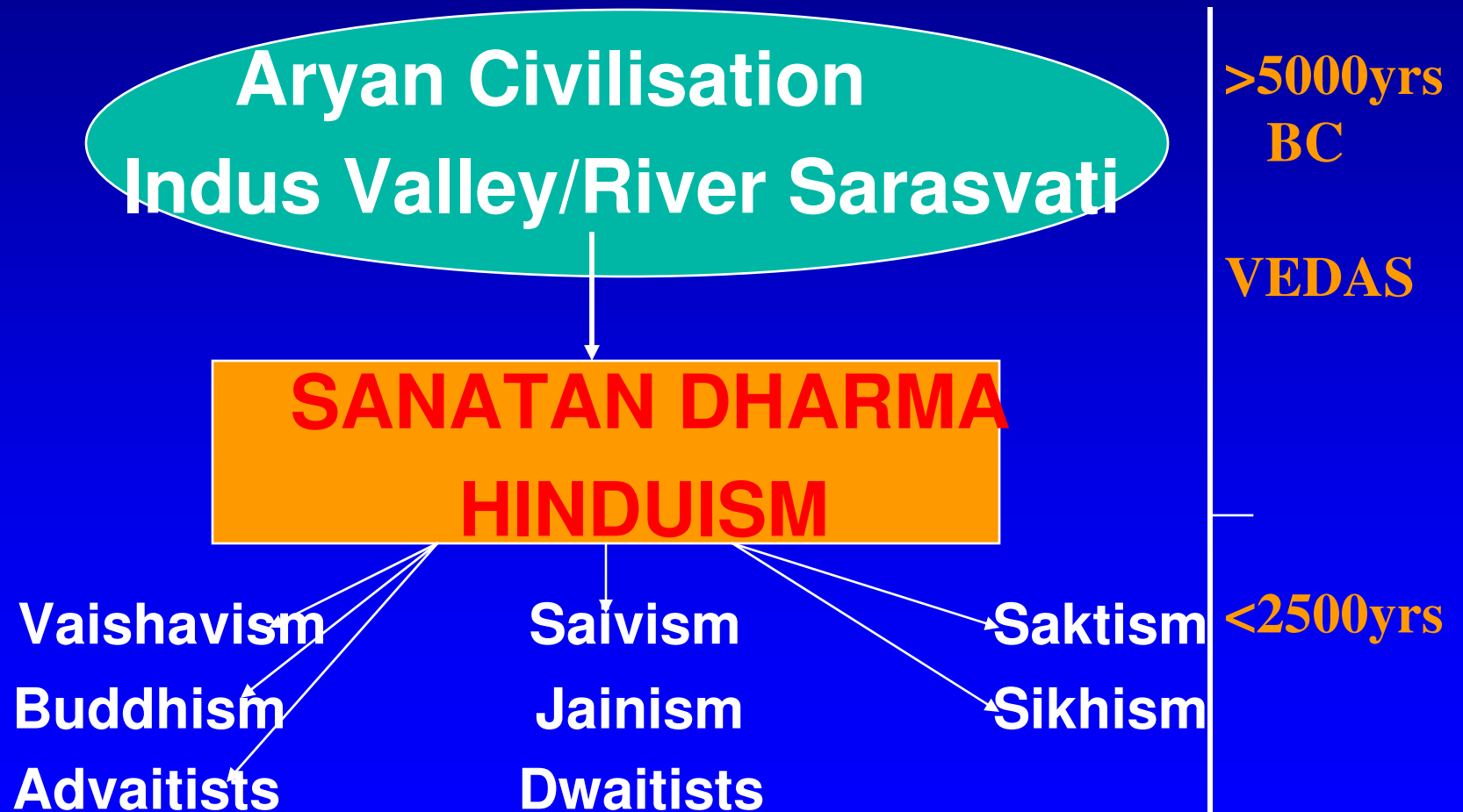
ritualism and growth of superstition

Jainism

Shankaracharya

Budhism

# Hinduism - Historical View



# What is God?



**Seven blind men and  
the elephant**



**Drop of water and the  
ocean**

# What Do Most Hindus Believe?

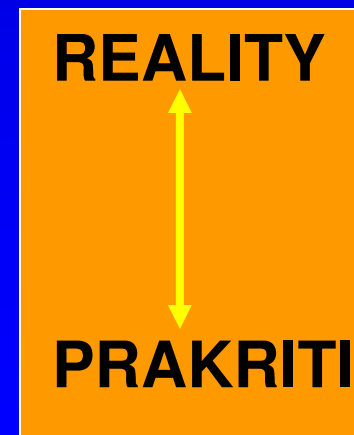
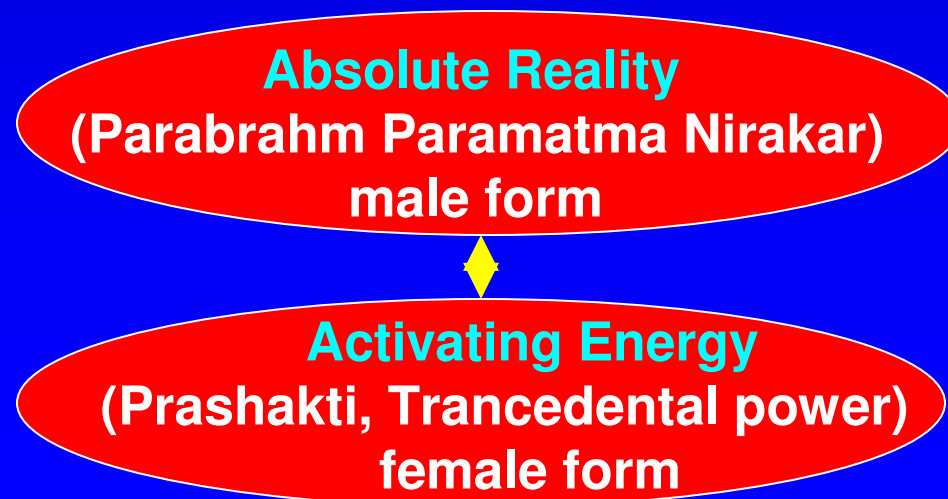
## 1. One God - all-pervading Supreme Being

But many GODS AND GODDESSES

represent many powers and functions  
of one supreme GOD

‘Eko aham bahu syam’ I am One but manifest in various forms **Upanishad**

Concept of God in a form of a Couple  
God depicted with His divine Shakti





# HINDU CONCEPT OF GOD

- **"God" and the universe**  
For Hindus, the entire universe is part of the Divine- everything is part of "God". And so "God", for Hindus, is present in everything.
- **"God" and the "Soul"**  
Hindus believe that each soul is an individual, and yet is also a part of the Divine; is part of "God".
- **"God" and gods**  
Hindus acknowledge and worship various gods, but these are all aspects of the one supreme "God". The gods Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma are different forms and names of the one God. Vishnu in particular has appeared on earth in various forms. Among these, Krishna and Rama are especially loved and worshipped.
- **Most Westerners think that Hinduism is polytheistic-which means worshipping many gods, but in fact Hindus actually believe in only one supreme God, called "Brahman".**
- **Brahman is a supreme spirit that permeates everything.**

**BUT: Brahman is not a being in the sense that Christians think of God as a being - Brahman is entirely impersonal, and entirely impossible to describe.**

- **Everything in the universe is part of Brahman, (including each one of us), but Brahman is more than the sum of everything in the universe.**

# HINDU CONCEPT OF GOD

- **One God and many Gods**  
There is only one ultimate reality, Brahman. But that ultimate reality shows itself in many forms, and some of those forms are called Gods.

The gods Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, for example, are different aspects of Brahman:

**Brahma reflects God's divine work of creating the universe .**

**Vishnu reflects God's work in keeping the universe in existence**

**Siva reflects God's work in destroying it.**

**Vishnu has appeared on earth in the past at times of crisis, in 9 different forms (a 10th form is yet to appear).**

# **GOD - Brahman**

## **WHAT IS THIS ENTITY?**

- **All pervading, energy, force, truth, self, creator, sustainer, destroyer, nature**
- **Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient**
- **Supreme Being; Supreme Reality, Self, Atman**
- **“They call Him the resplendent, the venerable, the adorable and He is the celestial, well winged the Great”**
- **“The Truth is one but the learned call Him by many names” Rig Veda 1-164-46**

# Life of a Hindu

A series of Prayers and Worship  
To remind him constantly of the  
purpose of existence

**REALISE GODHEAD**

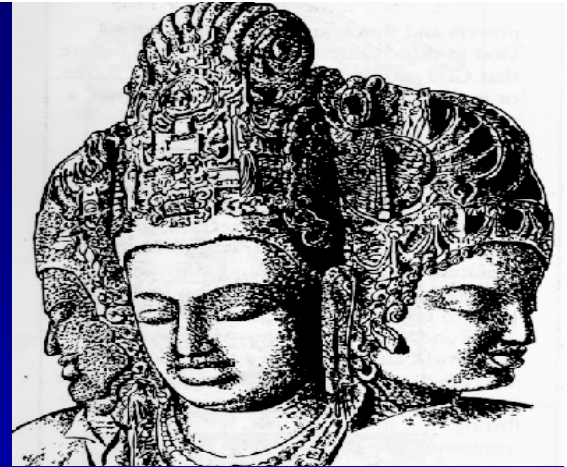
See God in everything - Difficult  
Sages devised masterplan - divinise everything

Why not see it in one object to start?  
Concentrate on that object as God

Further spiritual advancement

**Moorti  
Puja**

# TRIMURTI



**SUPREME BEING**  
controls entire universe through  
three major qualities

**BRAHMAA**

**VISHNU**

**SHIVA**

creator

preserver

destroyer

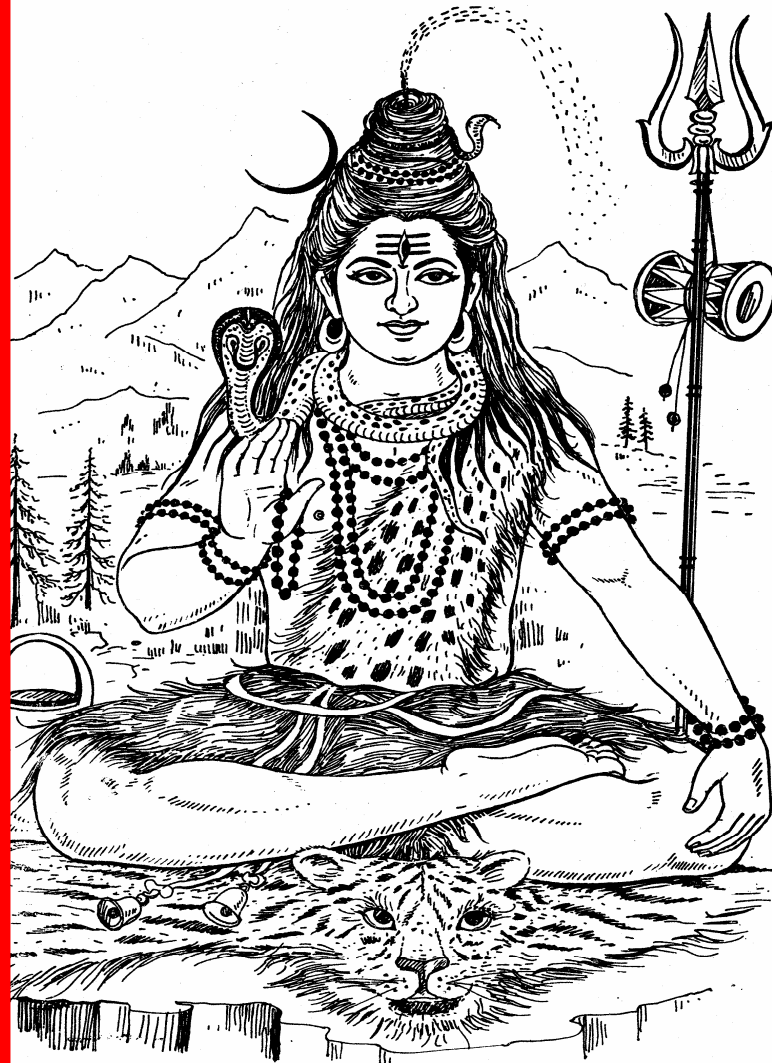
Generator

Operator

Destroyer

**ONE AND THE SAME**

# LORD SIVA



**Meditative pose**

**Blue complexion**

**Himalayas**

**Third eye;  
eyes half closed**

**Ganga**

**Moon**

**Snake**

**Trident**

**Damaru**

# **LORD SIVA - Meditative Pose**

- **Symbolises**
  - perfect harmony, poise
  - rooted in GOD
  - nothing disturbs Him
- **Remains and maintains**
  - perfect serenity
  - calmness
  - composure

**In all environments and circumstances**

# **LORD SIVA - Himalayas and Blue Complexion**

## **White background of snow-capped Himalayas**

- absolute purity of mind
- if mind is disturbed cannot see God in you
- Divinity (Godliness) is lost in a pool of thoughts. If thoughts are

dirty (Tamasic)

agitated (Rajasic)

you miss God or Divinity. Develop Sattwic

**Blue complexion** - infinite stature, vastness  
(sky, ocean)



# LORD SIVA - Third Eye and Eyes Half Closed

- Eyes shut - shut out the world
- Eyes open - totally involved in world
- **Half closed eyes** - mind absorbed in God
  - body engaged in worldly responsibilities
- **Third Eye** - Divine vision of reality
  - beyond body mind intellect
  - realise Self God

Opening of the Third Eye “Gyana Chakshu”

# LORD SIVA - Snake, Moon, Trident, Damaru

- **EGO** (Aham) → desires → suffering
- **Snake** - control over ego and desires
- **Coiled around neck** - that ego which once 'degraded' you now 'adorns' your personality
- **Moon** - cool, calmness even in adversity
- **Trident** - destruction of ego with 3 fold desires borne of mind body intellect
  - symbol of destruction of sufferings  
Daihik (physical), Daivik (natural),  
Bhautik (humans and animals)
- **Damaru** - circular ends (earth and sky) Sound echoes warning - all between sky and earth is transitory - only God is immortal

# LORD SIVA - Ganga

- **Ganga** - ultimate truth
  - purity
  - knowledge
- **King Bhagirath** - mythology
- **To receive this knowledge you need a man of Tapas and Self-control**
- **Truth (Ganga) - assimilated and ingrained in your life, carefully and gradually**

# LORD VISHNU

Blue complexion  
(infinite stature)

+

Yellow garb  
(earth)

decent of immeasurable infinite Truth  
into worldly realm

God in Human Form

Four Hands

Mind  
manas  
chakra

Intellect  
buddhi  
conch

Ego  
ahamkar  
mace

Consciousness  
chitta  
lotus

# What Do Most Hindus Believe?

1. One God → all-pervading Supreme Being
2. Divinity of Vedas → Sanatan Dharma

# **HINDUISM and INDIA**

- **Life in India is spiritually centered**
- **History of India is the story of seeking**
- **From King to the village farmer - all pursue DHARMA for one purpose:**
- **SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT**
- **Resilience (other faiths and invaders)**

# Dharma

- Sanskrit expression of the widest importance
- There is no corresponding word in any other language
- Wide variety of meanings
- Justice, righteous conduct, moral values of life, pious obligations, helpful to others, charity and selflessness, natural qualities and properties of living beings and things, duty and law

# **Hindu Dharma - Sanatan Dharma**

- **Wide diversity in Hinduism but there is a certain unity based on the 'eternal laws of nature'**
- **Formulated as solution to the eternal problems of human race, originating from natural human instincts**
- **(Sanatan -eternal      Dharma - laws of nature  
Dhru - uphold, sustain, support, hold together)**
- **Formula or code of righteous conduct covering every sphere of activity, in every capacity or role in relation to others, by which we can in a practical way achieve harmony, based on the teachings of Vedas**
- **These are applicable at all times and places**

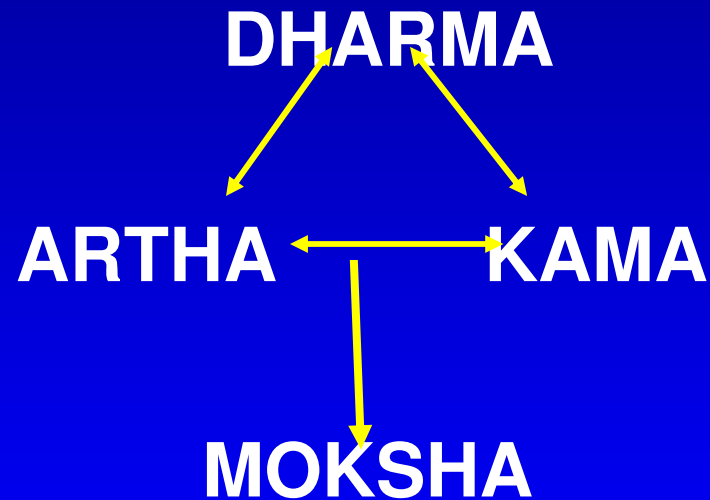


# Dharma

- “There is no act of man which is free from desire; whatever man does is the result of the impulse of desire” MANU:II:4
- Kama (desire) + material pleasure (artha) = source of all evil
- Dharma evolved as a solution to this eternal problem

# Dharma

Three fold ideals of



Desire for material pleasures must be entertained and enjoyed in conformity with Dharma

# What Do Most Hindus Believe?

**Cycles** → **Creation-Preservation-Dissolution**

**Karma** → **law of cause and effect**

**Reincarnation** → **Moksha**



*Hindu concept of Cyclic Creation and Cycle of Life and Death*



# Law of Karma

- Always be aware of your thoughts - consciousness. *Temptation!*
- As you sow, so shall you reap - be aware of everything that you do
- Take care of your *sanga* - company
- Develop a spirit of detachment
- Grow in the spirit of surrender to GOD and pray that you may rise above the *dwandas*
- Be grateful rather than asking from GOD
- Do as much good as you can without expectation of fruit

# Reincarnation

- Life does not end with death
- Body perishes - soul is eternal and immortal
- Theory of Karma-As you sow so shall you reap

Soul - in 'bondage'

liberation from round of birth/death

Moksha

( pure state-divine bliss)

# Reincarnation

- **Life and death on basis of law of causation**
- **People die of unfulfilled desires and born with a variety of desires**
- **Law of conservation - nothing is destroyed**
- **Law of Karma covers heredity and more**

# SAMSARA

- Samsara is derived from "to flow together," to go or pass through states, to wander. Mostly a great revolving door between life and death and a new life reincarnated cycle of life.
- In Hindu philosophical traditions, an ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth is assumed as a fact of nature and regard Samsāra negatively, as a fallen condition which is to be escaped. Samsāra is seen as ignorance of the True Self, Brahman, and thus the soul is led to believe in the reality of the temporal, phenomenal world.
- In Hinduism, it is avidya, or ignorance, of one's true self, that leads to ego-consciousness of the body and the phenomenal world. This grounds one in desire and the perpetual chain of karma and reincarnation. The state of illusion is known as Maya.

# SAMSKARAS OR SANSEKARAS

- Samskaras or sanskaras (Sanskrit: impression; under the impulse of previous impressions) are tendencies inherited from previous births which form a person's propensities in this life.
- Sanskaras are "impressions" (trace memories) accumulated through evolution, and later over the course of the evolution of consciousness in human reincarnation.



# The Plan of Journey of Life

**Proposed by our Great Rishis (Seers)**

- **Where are we going?**

**4 Purushartas**

- **Which stages do we pass through?**

**4 Ashrams**

- **Which direction do we follow?**

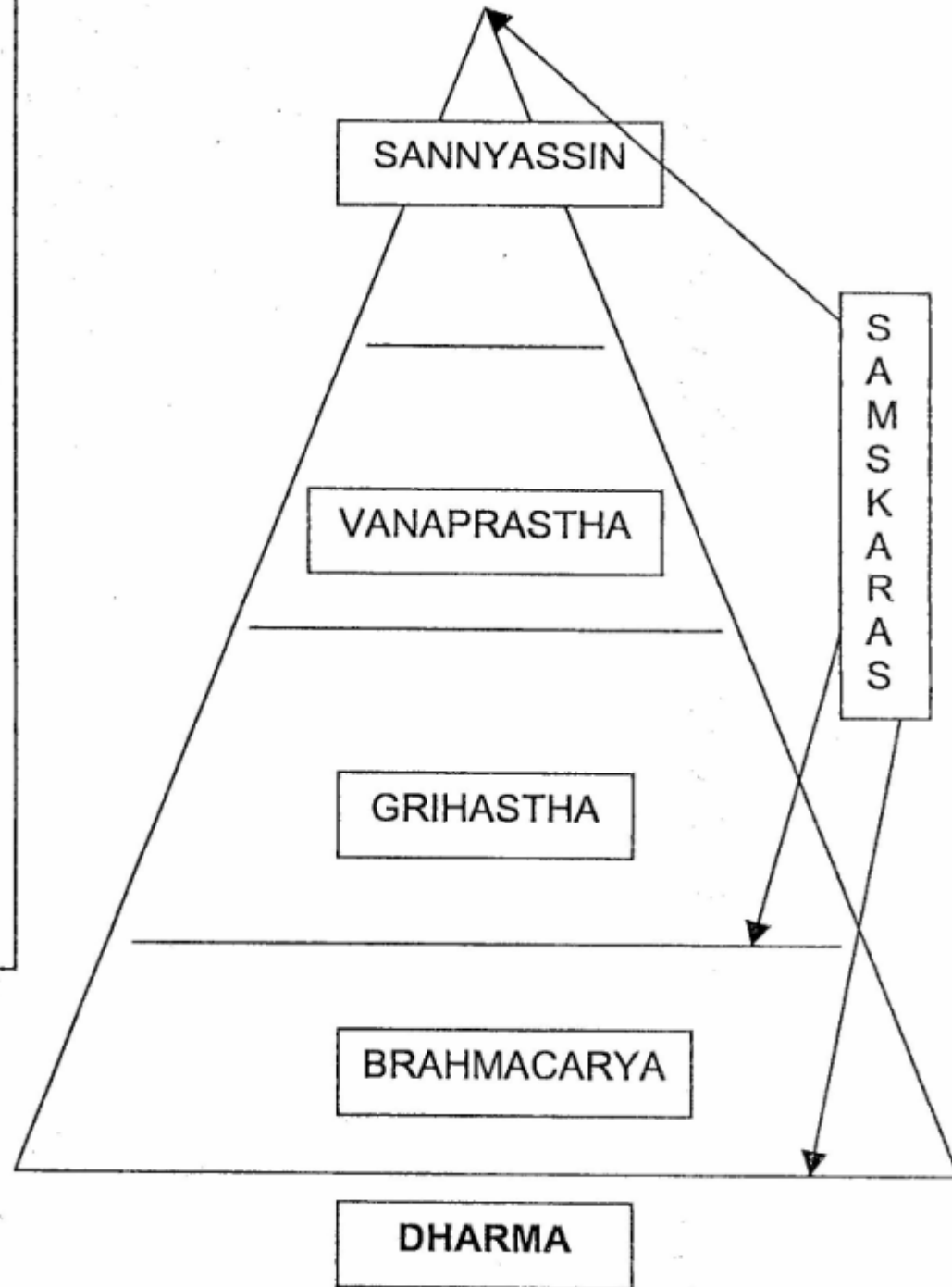
**16 Sanskaras**

**This is the basis of the Swastik –**

# SWASTIK

- **4 Ashramas** – Brahmacharya (youth, learning, student life – builds foundation)
  - Grihasta (family life – contribution to society)
  - Vanprastha (retirement – winding down)
  - Sanyasa (renunciation – preparing for Reality)
- **4 Purusharthas** – Dharma (rightful duty), Artha (material prosperity) Kama (enjoyment), Moksha (salvation)
- **4x4 Sanskaras** – 16 sacraments (not rituals)
  - refine and give direction from conception to death, with scientific basis
- **4 Vedas** – Rig (knowledge), Yajur (action duties), Sama (worship), Atharva (general knowledge)
- **4 Varnas** – social classes of society

A  
S  
H  
R  
A  
M  
A



# SANSKARA RITES

In Hinduism, Samskaras are also ritualistic practices a Hindu is expected to follow at various stages of his/her life. Samskaras can be translated as Sacraments in English. Samskaras eliminate the already present vices and induct various virtues in life. Thus Samskaras are an attempt to rebuild human life. It is a kind of spiritual planning which is different from physical or material planning.

## Pre-natal

- Garbhadharana: Conception
- Pumsavana: Rite for consecrating a child in the womb
- **Simantonnayana**: Rite for parting the hair of a pregnant woman

## Educational

- Vidhyarambha: Starting of education
- **Upanayana: Thread ceremony (Initiation)**
- Vedarambha: Starting of the study of the Vedas
- Keshanta or Godana: First shaving of the beard
- Samaavartana or Snaana: Ending of studentship

## Childhood

- **Jatakarma**: Birth ceremony
- **Namakarana**: Naming ceremony
- **Nishkarmana**: First outing
- **Annaprasana**: First feeding (solid)
- **Chudakarana**: First tonsure
- **Karnavedha**: Piercing of the ear lobes

## Adulthood

- **Vivaha**: Marriage
- **Anthyesthi**: Funeral rites

# UPANAYANA

- This is an initiation ceremony, during which the child is invested with a sacred thread , called *Yajyopaveet*, and he then begins his study of Vedas or in modern age begins his education. Time or Age –
- It is performed in the 5-8 year
- Significance –
- Upanayana is composed of two syllables, “Upa” means “near” and “nayan” means “to go”, i.e. to go near the “Acharya” or teacher
- Sacred thread called Yajyopaveet consists of three strings looped and tied with a knot. Wearing this signifies that the child has started his education. The three strings signify three obligations or debts which the individual has to repay or fulfil during his life time. (Teacher, Parents, Community)

# **VIVAH ( MARRIAGE CEREMONY )**

- **Vivah is the most important of all sanskaras. Sage Manu ( 600 B.C.) satted that Hindu's marriage was for all time, irrevocable and indissoluble.**

# HINDU WEDDING

- **Sanskars**

Hindu Wedding Ceremony Hindu sacraments are called 'sanskars' and the sacraments performed at the time of a wedding are called 'Vivah Sanskar'.

This sanskar marks the start of the second and the most important stage of life called the 'Grihista Ashrama' which involves setting up of a new family unit.

- Two individuals who are considered to be compatible form a lifelong partnership at this ceremony in which the responsibilities and duties of a householder are explained.
- The precise details and rituals performed in a wedding ceremony vary from region to region and often take several hours to complete.



# HINDU WEDDING



- The wedding ceremony takes place under a decorated and sacred canopy structure called the Mandap, which consists of 4 pillars – these represent Dharma (duty), Artha (acquisition of wealth), Kama (fulfillment of desires) and Moksha (salvation of the soul). These are essential to lead a good life.
- Brides parents give away their daughter (Kanyadaan)
- Varmala (numerous threads) placed around the couple
- Hasta Melap – groom takes hold of bride's right hand symbolising the new bond 'I hold your hand in the spirit of Dharma'
- Mangal Fera – bride and groom go around the sacred fire 4 times
- Sapta-padi (Seven Step Vows: faithfulness, united together, sharing equally, protect each other, enjoy all given by God, service, four objectives)
- Ashirwaad (Blessings)





# What Do Most Hindus Believe?

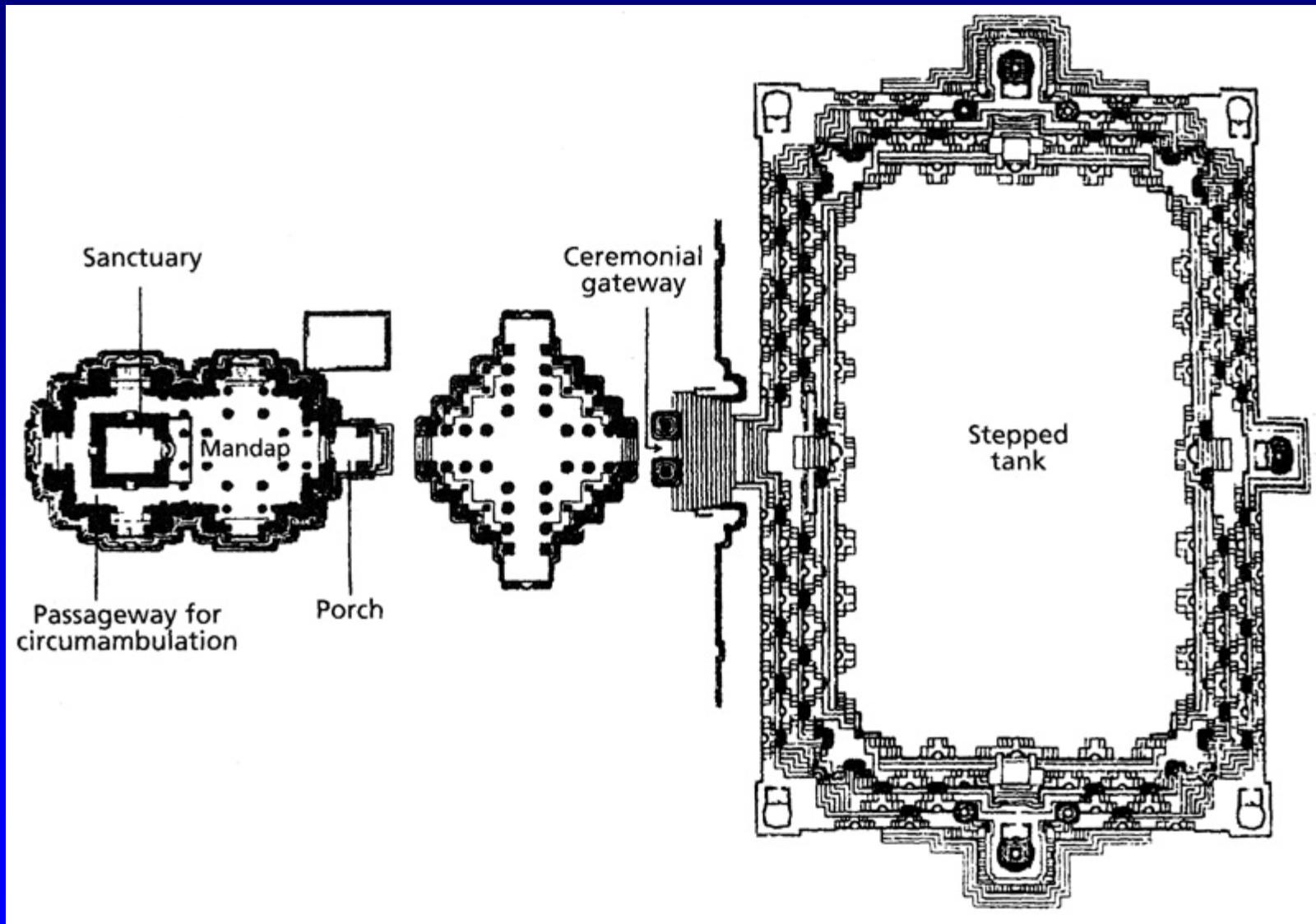
1. One God → all-pervading Supreme Being
2. Divinity of Vedas → Sanatan Dharma
3. Cycles → Creation-Preservation-Dissolution
4. Karma → law of cause and effect
5. Reincarnation → Moksha
6. Existence of Divine beings  
temples+rituals+sacraments → Devas and God

# TEMPLES

## Purpose

1. Create religious atmosphere
2. Feeling of peace and calm
3. Awakens divine thoughts and actions
4. Pray together – increases purity in community
  - builds solidarity
  - decreases quarrels
5. Deity is 'King of Kings'
6. Represents body (temple) and creation (5 elements)
7. Social and educational

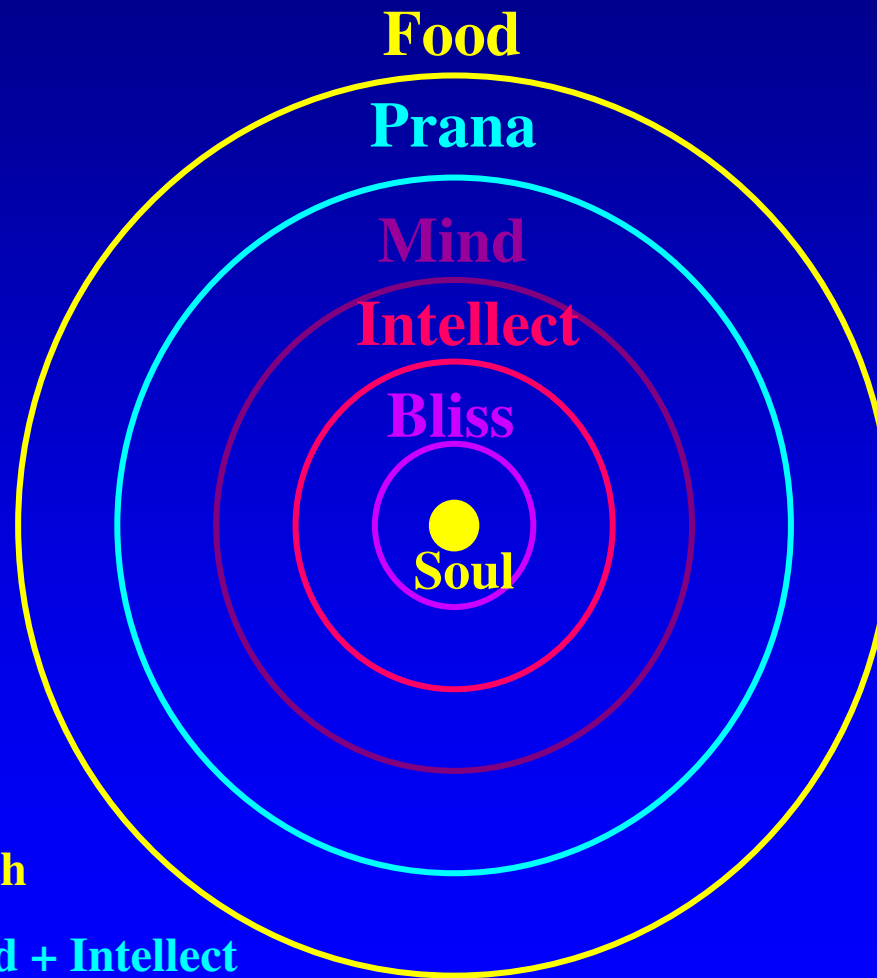
# HINDU TEMPLE



# Temple Architecture is Highly Symbolic

- Every temple has 3 Prakaras or surrounding walls creating passageway for circumambulation
  - represent 3 bodies – gross, subtle and causal
  - within these lie the Deity with a burning lamp
  - represents the ATMAN and everlasting light of wisdom, which can be achieved only when one has gained mastery over three physical states body, mind and intellect
- Some temples have 5 walls and passages
  - represents the 5 sheaths

# The 5 sheaths & 3 Bodies



**Physical Body : Food Sheath**

**Subtle Body : Prana + Mind + Intellect**

**Causal Body : Bliss Sheath**

# What Do Most Hindus Believe?

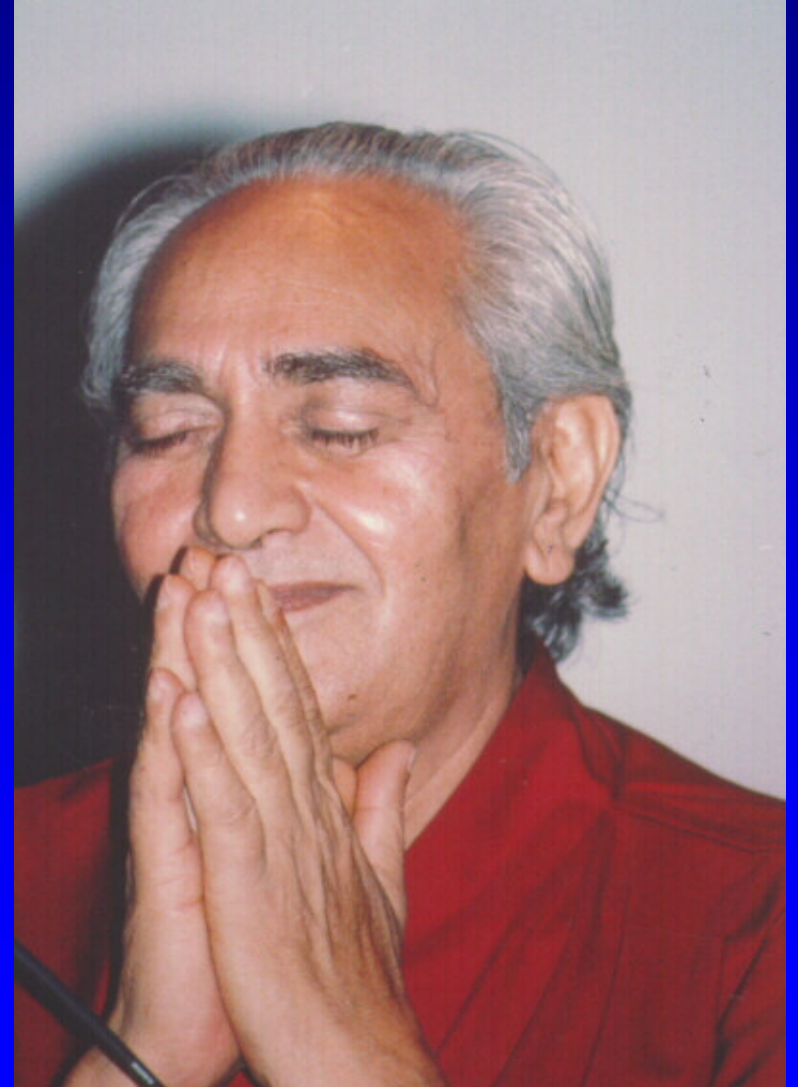
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5. Reincarnation → Moksha
6. Existence of Divine beings in unseen worlds  
temples+rituals+sacraments → Devas and God
7. Sat-Guru → 'guide' → scriptures  
+discipline+conduct+purification+meditation

# His Holiness Shri Swami Rama

“I pray to the  
Divinity in  
you”

*Deho devalaya proktah  
Jiva deva sanatana*

Bhavana Upanishad



# Yoga

- Means to 'join'
- Unite, connect with Supreme Being
- Bhakti Yoga - love and devotion

Jnana Yoga - knowledge and understanding

Karma Yoga - action

Raj Yoga - self control and meditation



# **RAJA YOGA**

- **Practical and scientific method for reaching the Truth or the basis of Who am I.**
- **It lays out a method of investigation, and asks you to practice this honestly**
- **The knowledge of the mind and internal nature of man cannot be had until we have the power to observe the inside as much as we do so outside.**
- **Raja Yoga gives us the instrument to observe within - it is the mind itself**

# **RAJA YOGA**

## **Eight Steps -Astanga**

**Yama** -non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-receipt of gifts

**Niyama** - cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study, self-surrender to God

**Asana** - posture

**Pranayama** - control of Prana

**Pratahara** - restraint of senses from their objects

**Dharana** - fixing the mind on a spot

**Dhyana** - meditation

**Samadhi**- superconsciousness

# PRANAYAMA

- Is control of Prana
- By what power is Akasa manufactured? *Prana*
- Sum total of all forces in universe is *Prana*
- Breathing is one of many exercises for Pranayama
- Breath is the fly-wheel of the body machine
- Raj Yoga is the path for immediate mental calmness through consciousness through observation of your breathing

# Day to Day Observances

- **Prayer in the morning (puja)**
- **Prayer before meals**
- **Food usually vegetarian (sanctity of life)**
- **Follow the principles of Yoga (Astanga Yoga)**

# Puja



**Puja is a means of direct personal communion with God by means of worship. There are many rituals.**

**Offering of perfumed substances, flowers, incense, lighting Diya, fresh fruits as prasaad are five elements of traditional puja, which culminates in Aarti**

# Worship and Prayer

- **Methods of communion with God**
- **Common motive is love of God**
- **The rule of love is to give something to the one we love – so it is natural for the devotee to offer something to God – this act is worship**
- **There are times when our love takes the form of asking something from the one we love – make our needs known to Him – this asking is prayer**
- **The greatest form of prayer is gratitude for what we have been given**

**We pray to Gods and Goddesses (Deities)**

# KNOWING GOD

- **PRAYER**

We ask for things - it pushes it away from us. The very request is a statement of lack, which only produces a wanting in your reality.

- **The correct Prayer is never a prayer of supplication but a PRAYER OF GRATITUDE**

When you thank God in advance for that which you choose to experience you acknowledge that it is there

- **Thankfulness is the most powerful statement to GOD**

**Never supplicate. Appreciate**

# HINDU SCRIPTURES

- **Holy Books:**

**The Vedas collections of Sanskrit hymns (written down 1200-900BCE, but based on older oral versions)**

**Brahmanas-ritual instructions (1000-650 BCE)**

**The Upanishads, mystical works (400-200 BCE)**

**The Bhagavad Gita (200 BCE).**

**All Hindus accept that the Vedas, a set of sacred verses or hymns, written in the Sanskrit language around 1500 BCE, contain the truths of their religion.**

**The Vedas are said to have existed for ever, and the date above, is merely when they were written down.**

**Not many Hindus have read the Vedas, so the Vedas have their affect through their influence on other Hindu scriptures.**

**Most Hindus revere the Bhagavad-Gita (Song of the Bhagava), written around 200 BCE.**



# HINDU SCRIPTURES

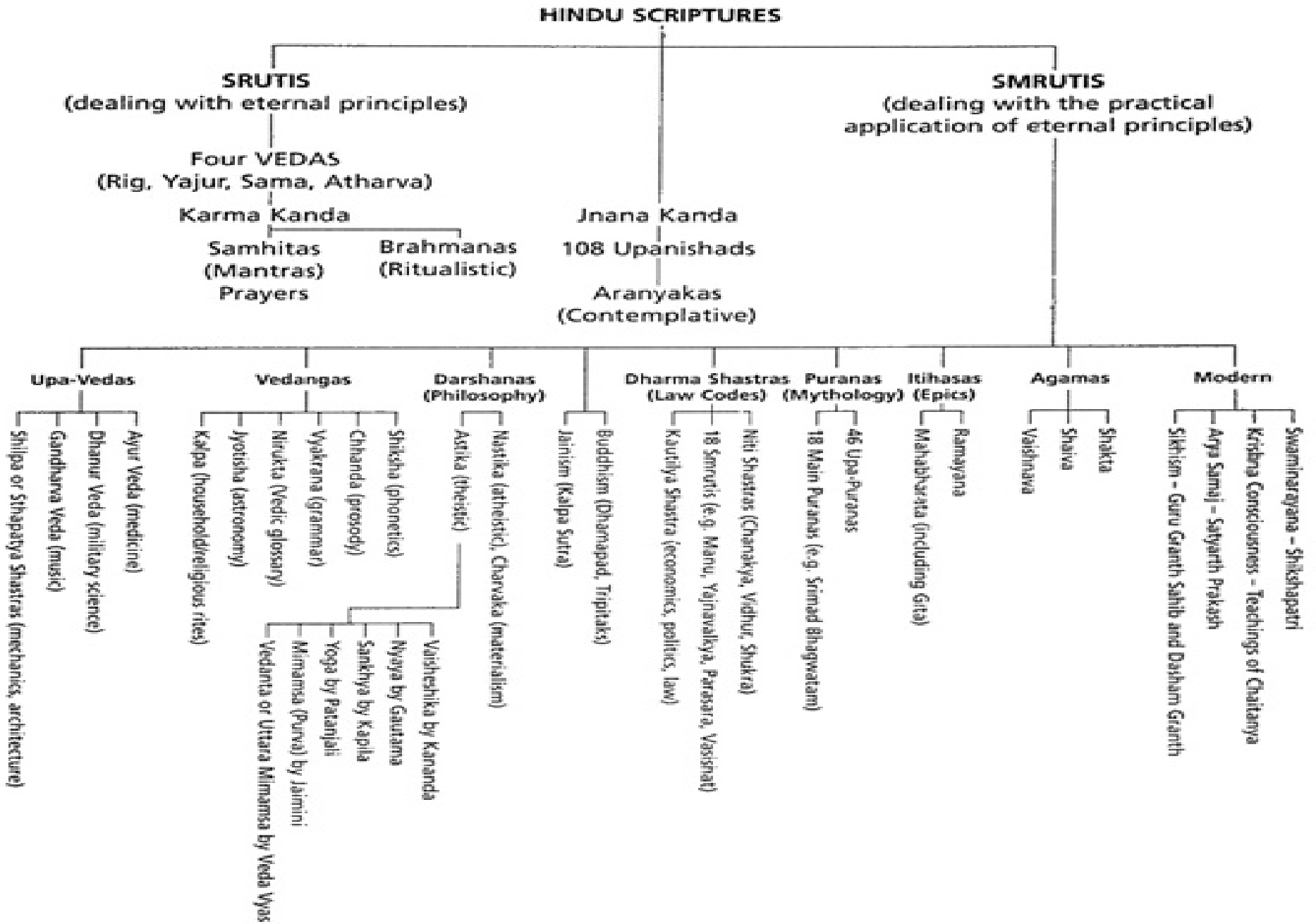
- In Hinduism there are 2 sets of books
  - Shrutis – ‘what is heard’ or ‘ what is revealed by God’ and deal with never changing, eternal principles
  - Smrutis – ‘what is remembered’ deal with practical applications of these principles
- The Vedas collections of Sanskrit hymns (written down about 1500BCE, but based on older oral versions >5000 BCE)

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# FAMILY TREE OF THE MAIN HINDU SCRIPTURES



# **BHAGAVAD GITA**

- **Bhagavad Gita is the most beloved scripture of India**
- **It means 'Song of the Spirit'**
- **It is a divine communication of truth-realisation between man and the Creator**
- **The pantheistic doctrine of the Gita is that  
GOD IS EVERYTHING**
- **Its verses celebrate the  
DISCOVERY OF THE ABSOLUTE  
SPIRIT BEYOND CREATION  
HIDDEN ESSENCE OF ALL  
MANIFESTATION**

# BHAGAVAD GITA

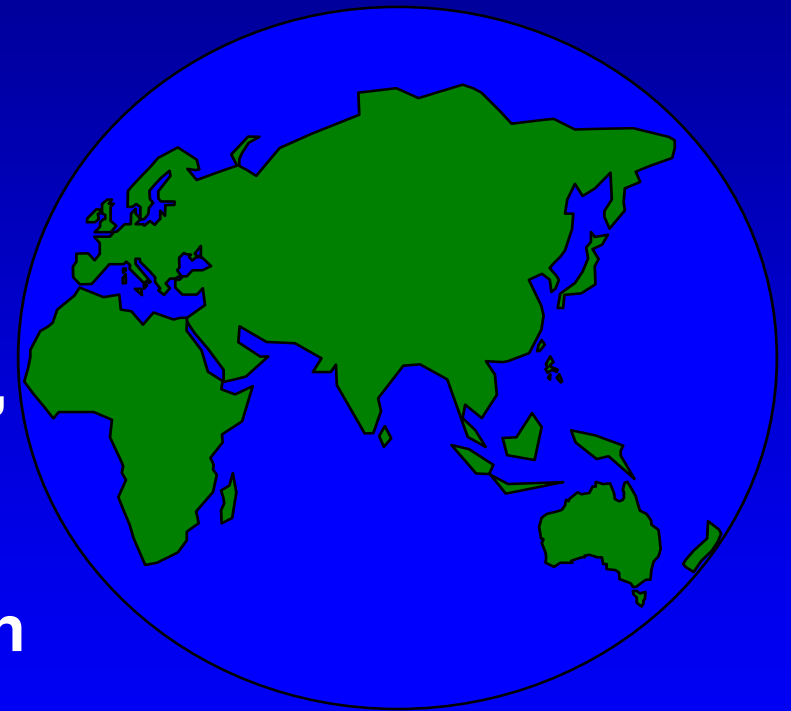
- The main theme of the Gita is that one should be an adherent of SANYASA, A RENOUNCER OF THIS EGOISM INGRAINED THROUGH AVIDYA, IGNORANCE
- By renunciation of all desires (Vasanas) springing from the EGO AND MIND and its environment – this causes separateness from SPIRIT.
- Through Yoga and meditation (SAMADHI), man detaches himself from and ultimately dissolves into Reality – the dream/delusion terminates and awakens in one the PURE COSMIC CONCIIOUSNESS OF THE SUPREME BEING

# What Do Most Hindus Believe?

1. One God → all-pervading Supreme Being
2. Divinity of Vedas → Sanatan Dharma
3. Cycles → Creation-Preservation-Dissolution
4. Karma → law of cause and effect
5. Reincarnation → Moksha
6. Existence of Divine beings in unseen worlds  
temples+rituals+sacraments → Devas and God
7. Sat-Guru → 'guide' → scriptures  
+discipline+conduct+purification+meditation
8. Ahimsa → all life is sacred,  
concept of mother earth

# Earth as Divine Mother

- Earth is a cosmic power with Divine Presence not just a material thing
- Honour all creatures on earth
- Enjoy the beauty of the planet, rivers, mountains, forests and oceans
- Divinity is not in heaven but on Earth
- Milk mother nature do not exploit her



# **Sleep in the lap of Mother Nature**

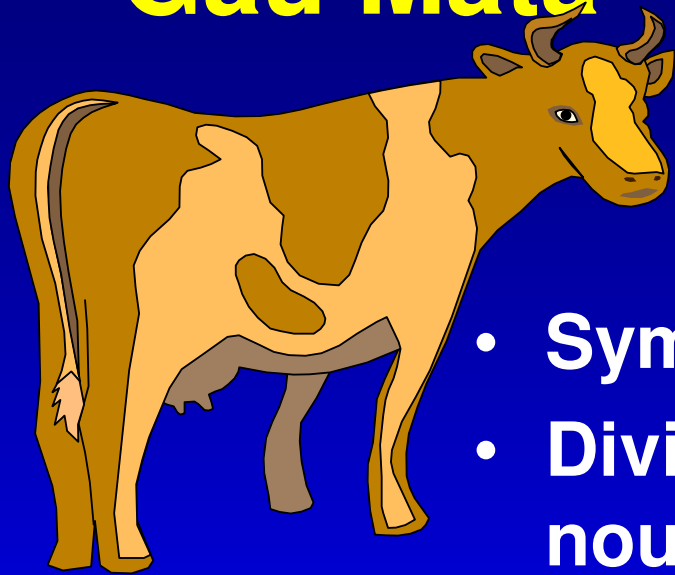
**Live in complete harmony with nature  
Experience the grace of God in the  
splendour of the universe**

**Be blessed by God's reassuring love  
The sweet dawn will sweeten your soul  
And when the day's task is over  
sleep in the lap of Mother Nature**

**- Yajur Veda 34.37**



# Gau Mata - The Symbol of Cow



Why is the cow sacred?

- **Symbol of Divine love and grace**
- **Divine Mother- Produces milk for nourishment of others**
- **Respect for cow instills virtues of gentleness**
- **Reverence of cow teaches respect for all life**



## Important Values

- **Matri devo bhav (Mother is divine)**
- **Pitri devo bhav (Father is divine)**
- **Atithi devo bhav (Humanity is divine)**

**“Adoration of one’s mother is equal to the adoration of God”**

**- Mahabharat**

# Concept of Mother Worship

- **Durga puja**
  - **Evil-destroying, protective mother**
- **Gau puja**
  - **Feeds us and looks after our health**

# **Mother Earth in the Vedas**

**“The Earth is my mother and I am her son”**

**– Atharva Veda 12-1-12**

**“The Earth on which grow foodgrains, rice and barley**

**On which live all types of men**

**Our homage be to her, who mellows with the rain”**

**– Atharva Veda 12-1-42**

# **Our Prayers to Mother Nature (Shanti Path)**

<b>May there be peace in heaven</b>	<b>(dyauh)</b>
<b>Peace in the atmosphere</b>	<b>(antariksha)</b>
<b>Peace across waters</b>	<b>(apah)</b>
<b>May there be peace on earth</b>	<b>(prithvi)</b>
<b>May peace flow from herbs, plants and trees</b>	<b>(oshadh) (vanaspat)</b>
<b>May all beings radiate peace</b>	<b>(vishwa)</b>
<b>May peace be every where</b>	<b>(sarva)</b>
<b>May that peace come to me too</b>	<b>(sama)</b>
<b>May there be peace, peace, peace (Aum Shanti, shanti, shanti)</b>	

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+discipline+conduct+purification+meditation
8. Ahimsa → life is sacred
9. Festivals as a reminder of Hindu principles

# Hindu Festivals

- Festivals have their own spiritual value.
- All great Hindu festivals have religious, social and hygienic elements in them.
- Create faith in God if properly observed.
- Hindu festivals always have a spiritual significance.
  - They wean man away from sensual pleasures
  - Take him gradually to the spiritual path and divine communion.



- **Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is the most popular of all the festivals.**
- **Regardless of the mythological explanation one prefers, what the festival of lights really stands for today is a reaffirmation of hope, a renewed commitment to friendship and goodwill, and a religiously sanctioned celebration of the simple — and some not so simple — joys of life**
- **Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya - Lead me from darkness to light.**



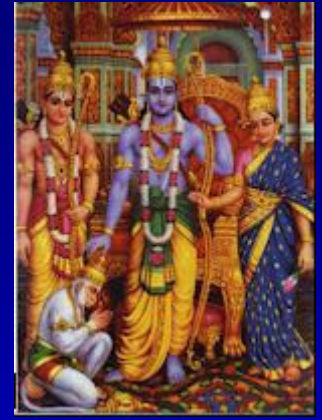
# Diwali

- One of the most festive and beautiful times of the year
- Diwali literally means 'A Row of Lights'
- It is a time filled with love and light, a time for rejoicing
- It is celebrated on the darkest night of the darkest period yet it is a celebration of light
- Diwali is heralded as the triumph of good over evil





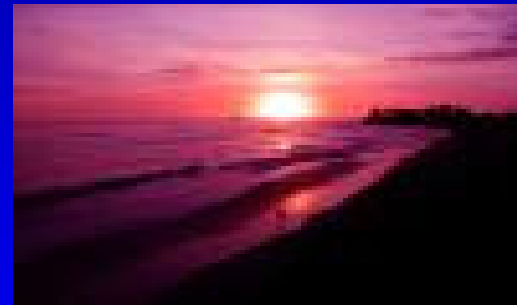
# Meanings of Diwali – Its Symbols and Rituals

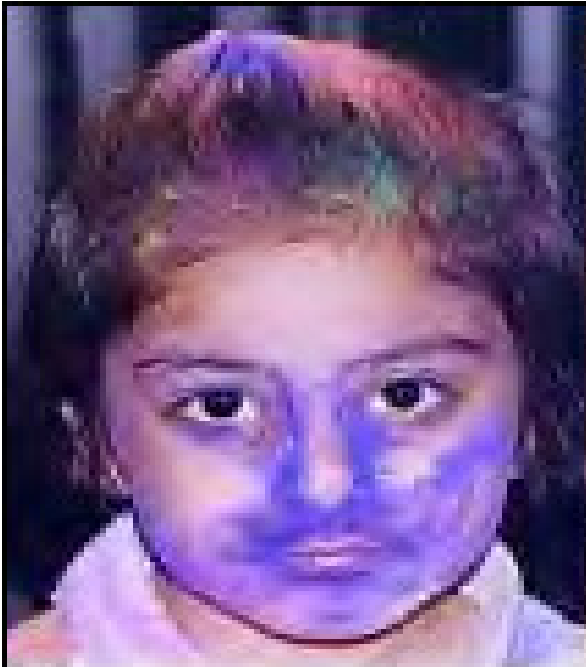


- Diwali celebrates Lord Rama's long-awaited return to Ayodhya
- It also commemorates Lord Krishna's victory over the demon Narakasura
- Diwali is also associated with fall of Bali a demon king by Lord Vishnu
- **DIWALI SIGNIFIES TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL – THE SAME BATTLE THAT ENRAGES WITHIN US – A REMINDER OF THE TASK AHEAD FOR US**

# DIWALI

- **Celebration of Light**
- **A Fresh Start**
- **Maha Laxmi**



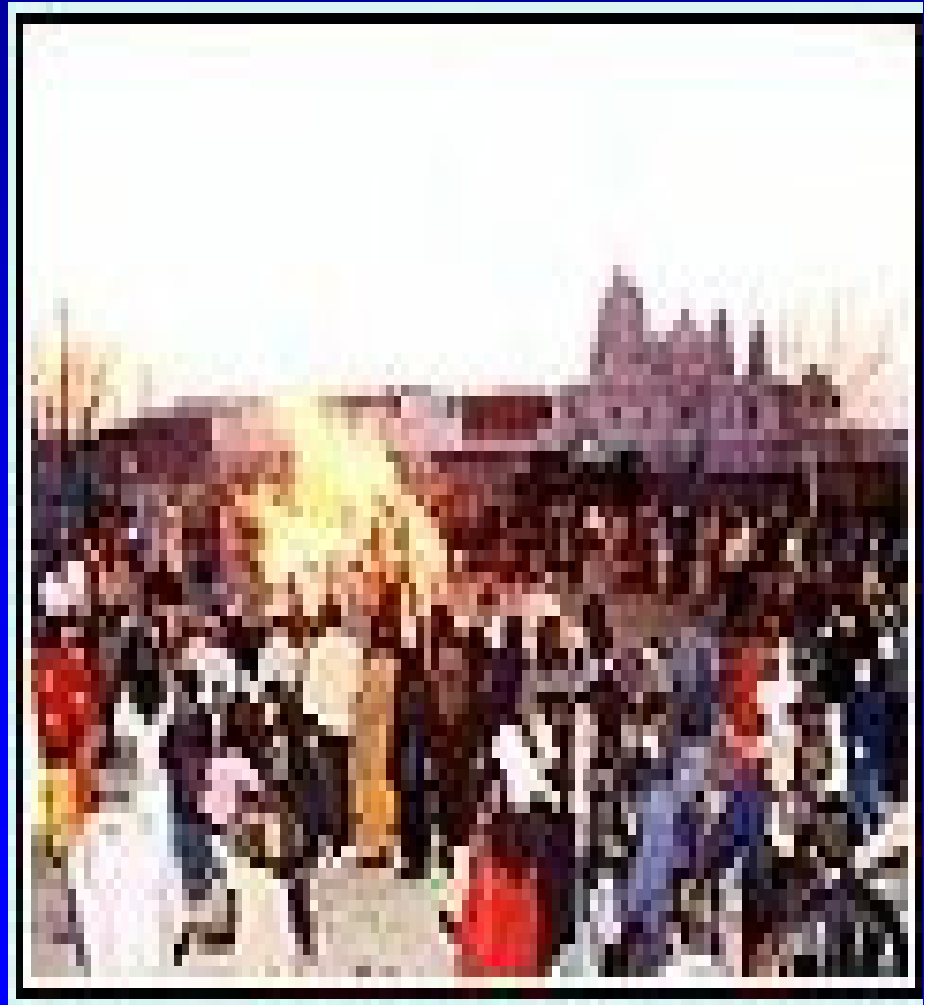


# the holi festival



# HOLI

- The festival of Holi is celebrated on the day after the full moon in early March every year.
- When gram, wheat and other grains are roasted, they are called HOLUK, hence the name HOLI
- Originally a festival to celebrate good harvests and fertility of the land
- Festival of thanks giving



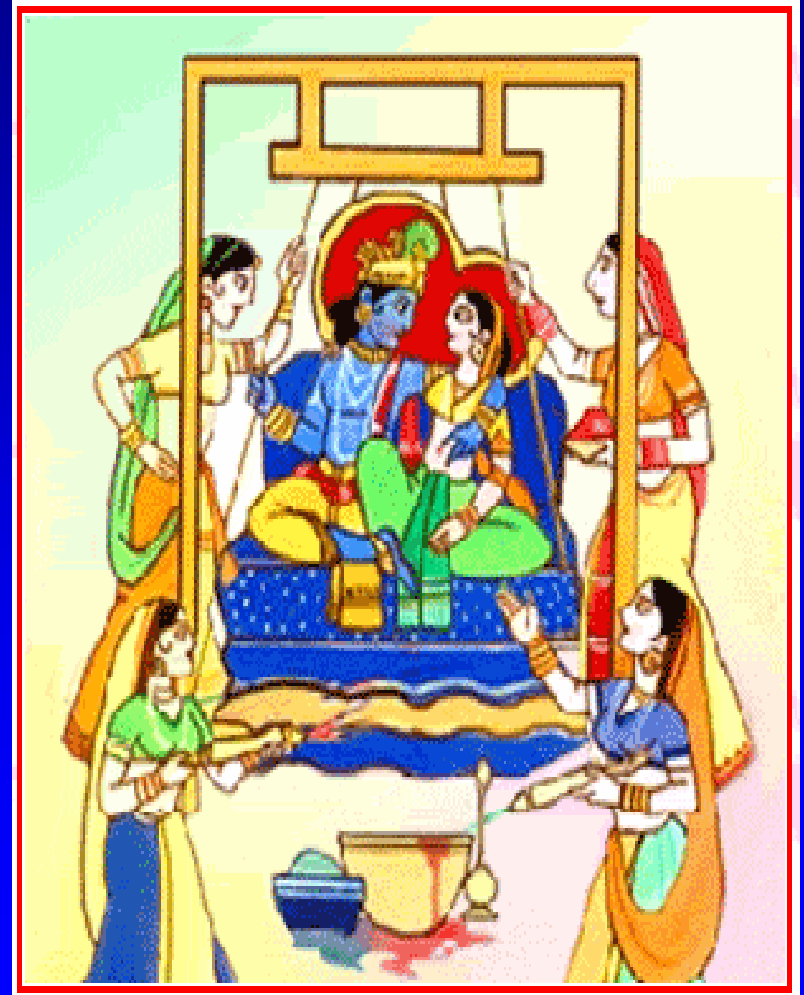
# HOLI

- Holi is now a symbolic commemoration of a legend from Hindu Mythology.
- An arrogant king, Hiranyakashipu resents his son Prahlada worshipping Lord Vishnu. He attempts to kill his son but fails each time. Finally, the king's sister Holika who is said to be immune to burning, sits with the boy in a huge fire. However, the prince Prahlada emerges unscathed, while his aunt burns to death.
- Holi commemorates this event from mythology, and huge bonfires are burnt on the eve of Holi as its symbolic representation.



# HOLI

- **The religious element** in the Holi festival consists of worship of Sri Krishna. In some places it is also called the Dol Yatra. The word *dol* literally means "a swing". An image of Sri Krishna as a babe is placed in a little swing-cradle and decorated with flowers and painted with coloured powders. The pure, innocent frolics of little Krishna with the merry milkmaids—the Gopis of Brindavan—are commemorated. Devotees chant the Name of Sri Krishna and sing Holi-songs relating to the frolics of little Krishna with the Gopis.



# HOLI

- **The social element** during Holi is the uniting or "embracing" of the great and the small, of the rich and the poor. It is also the uniting of equals.
- The festival teaches us to "let the dead bury the dead". We should forget the outgoing year's ill-feelings and begin the new year with feelings of love, sympathy, co-operation and equality with all.
- We should try to feel this oneness or unity with the Self also.



A Festival of the Masses

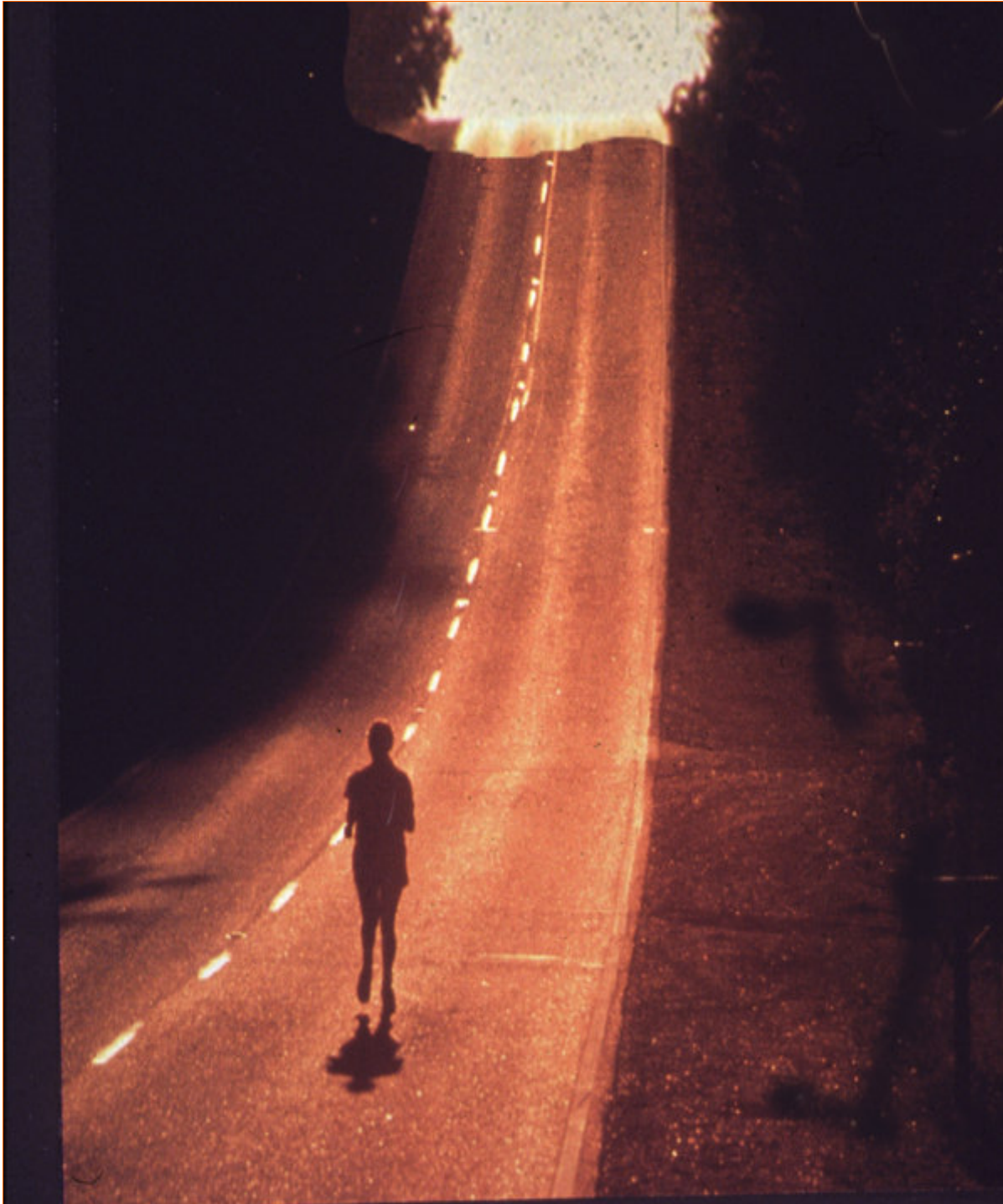
Rajasthani painting shows men and women playing the Holi

**What is it by knowing  
which everything is  
known?**

**Know thy Self**

**Rig Veda**





**Are you alone?**

**What about  
scriptures?**

**What about gurus?**

**YOU ARE NEVER  
ALONE**

**GOD IS ALWAYS  
WITH YOU -  
WITHIN YOU.  
SEEK WITHIN AND  
YOU WILL FIND  
THE ANSWER**

# WHO AM I?

BRAHMAN

Body

Mind

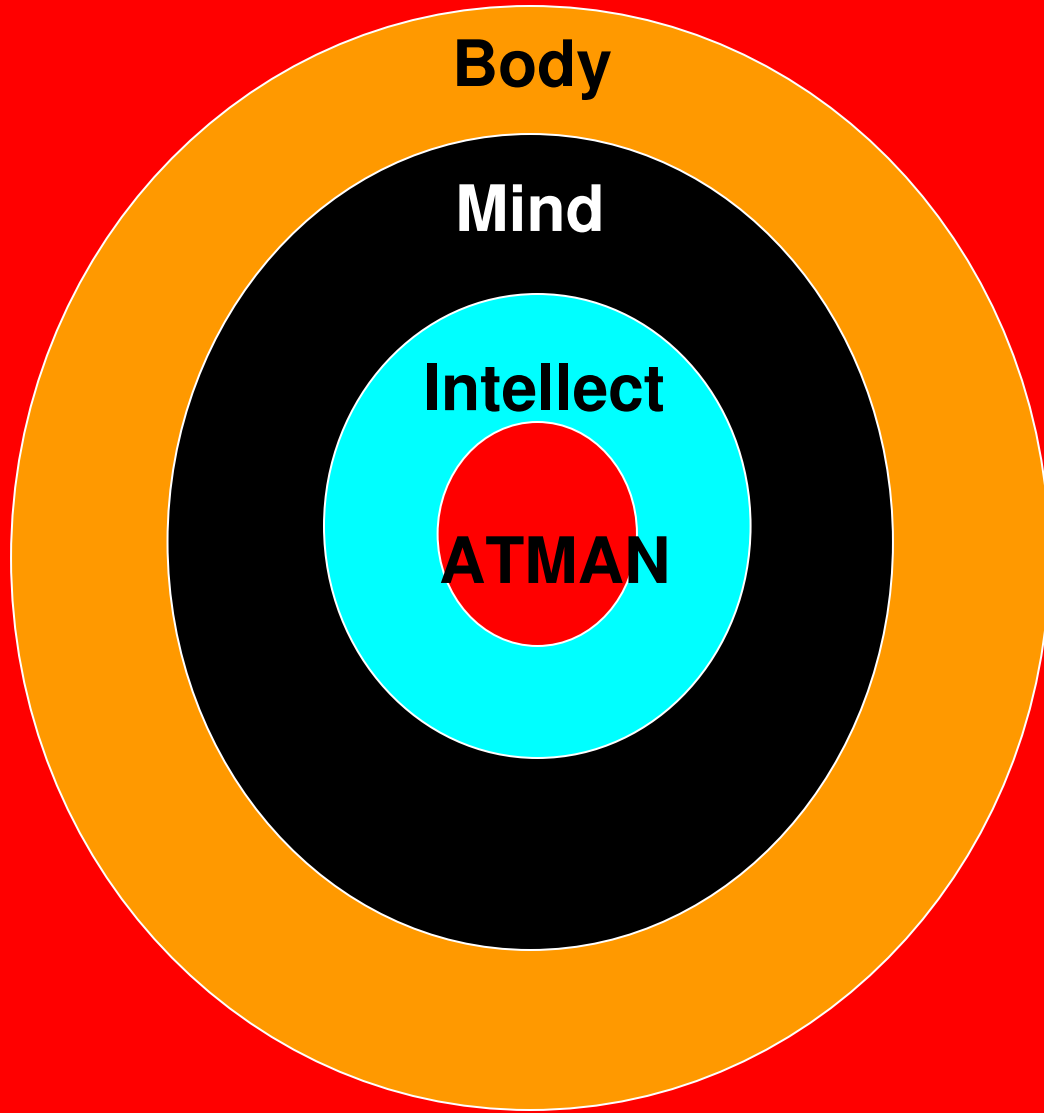
Intellect

ATMAN

BRAHMAN

BRAHMAN

BRAHMAN



# Balance in Life

- Hindu scriptures preach balanced life



# Who Am I?

O Servant, where dost thou seek me

Lo! I am within thee.

I am neither in the temple nor in the mosque

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies

Nor in yoga nor in renunciation

If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once

see Me

Thou shalt meet Me in a moments time.

**Songs of Kabir**

# Essence of Hinduism

**“Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or all of these - and be free. This is the whole religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details”**

**Swami Vivekanand**

# Exercise - Yoga

- **4 main systems of Yoga – these are related and have a common objective – what is that?**
- **Why do you think yoga is becoming popular in the West?**
- **An athlete trying to win a Gold medal at the Olympics - Can you relate this to the philosophy of Yoga?**
- **Do you want to practice achieving quietude and peace?**

# Exercise - Yoga

- The objective is to win a gold medal
- Athlete decides which race
- Knowledge (Jnana) in the form of a coach to sharpen the technique
- Athlete has to devote himself to training and keep aim in mind (Bhakti)
- Action (Karma) is needed; no race can be won without running and proper preparation
- Above all, self-control and self-discipline (Raj Yoga) are required to turn hard training into winning the race