

# **Welcome to Faith Presbyterian Church**

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Questions?

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Study notes are on the web site:

[www.FaithCapeCoral.org](http://www.FaithCapeCoral.org)

A graphic for Hinduism featuring a central bronze statue of Lord Shiva in a dancing pose, surrounded by other Hindu deities and symbols.

# **HINDUISM**

**Other Faiths - Other Traditions**

A graphic for Buddhism featuring a central Buddha statue, a stupa, and a traditional Buddhist temple building.

# **BUDDHISM**

# Hinduism

## The Glue that Holds India Together

India has: 4,599 distinct communities  
325 languages  
12 language families and 24 different scripts

"Nevertheless, an '**all pervasive sense of Indianness**' prevails through the linguistic, cultural, and economic diversities of the communities of the country."

Ratna Nanda Amulya, ed., Census of India, 1991

Radical diversity (or tolerant pluralism) along with an "all pervasive sense of Indianness" is what it means to be a Hindu.

## Hinduism - The Name

1. May be derived from ancient inscription for the land between the **H**imalaya Mountain and **B**indu (an ancient country).
2. May be derived from Persian word for India.
3. May be derived from the corruption of Persian word Sindu (River Indus).
4. May have been invented by a British administrator in India during colonial period.

# Hinduism

Hinduism differs from Christianity and other Western religions in that it does not have a single founder, a specific theological system, a single system of morality or a central religious organization. **It consists of "thousands of different religious groups that have evolved in India since 1500 CE.** As such, it is the oldest religion in the world.

**Hinduism is a culture, civilization and ethnic identity as much as it is a religion**

- 762 million followers or 13% of world's population.
- It is the dominant religion in India and Nepal.
- Estimated to be 1.1 million Hindus in the U.S.

# Hinduism

"The most important thing to learn about Hindus and Hinduism is that being religious for Hindus has very little to do with what they think or believe; put another way, it has very little to do with 'orthodoxy,' or correct belief and doctrines. ... and has much more to do with behavior and action, or what is sometimes called 'orthopraxy' – correct action."

Gerald James Larson, U. of California at Santa Barbara

Correct actions include personal cleanliness, eating habits, family relations, marital practices, regional associations and the manner in which one can choose and interact with friends.

# Overview

## Classical Hinduism

**4 Purposes of Life**

**4 Stages of Life**

**4 Casts**

## Hinduism meets Modernity

## Hinduism in America - basic types and beliefs

## 4 Purposes of Life Classical Hinduism

- 1. Dharma** (law, duty, custom) - one must pursue one's **proper relationship to family and community**.
- 2. Artha** (wealth, work, business) - one **must make a living**, have an occupation and take one's place in the proper political functioning of the kingdom or state.
- 3. Kama** (desire, pleasure) - the pursuit of one's **legitimate erotic and aesthetic activities** - sexuality, play, recreation, the arts and literature.
- 4. Moksha** (release, salvation) - the pursuit of **spiritual practices** in order to attain release from the continuing round of rebirth and transmigration.

## The 4 Purposes of Life are Correlated to the 4 Stages of Life

1. **Brahmacharya** (pursuing sacred knowledge) - the stage of being a **student**, may live in the home of a guru to learn the traditions.
2. **Grihastha** (householder) - the stage of being **married, raising a family** and fulfilling one's basic social responsibilities in the community.
3. **Vanaprastha** (forest-dweller) - stage of **retirement** from ordinary family life and social obligations, begins to think of ultimate goal of Moksha (release/salvation).
4. **Sanyaas** (abandoning, renunciation) - **final stage** when one **renounces all worldly attachments** in pursuit of Moksha.

(#3 and #4 are optional)

## 4 Castes

1. **Brahmins** (priests) - highest caste, made up of "families considered the purest and most learned" among the people of India.
2. **Kshatriyas** (warriors) - next highest caste, made up of families with primary responsibilities in governance and maintenance of social order.
3. **Vaishya** (belonging to the people) - families involved in commerce, business and ordinary economic productivity.
4. **Shudra** (servile) - lowest caste of servants.

## 4 Castes

**Untouchables** - (asprishya or candela)  
another grouping beneath Shudra - they are involved in activities such as cleaning human waste areas, removing dead animals, tanning, etc. They usually live in segregated areas outside of main villages or towns.

Caste system abolished by law in 1948 but still has significant force. Since 2001 there have been mass conversions from Untouchables (**Dalit**, or **Harijan** - children of God) to Buddhism and Christianity. Not Islam - India occupied by Muslims from 1200-1757AD; hostility still exists - **Pakistan created in 1947.**

## Hinduism Meets Modernity (1757 - present)

The **Neo-Hindu Reformers** (and nationalists) had in common:

1. Develop among the people of India a **self-confident national awareness** as foundation for India being a modern nation-state.
2. **Reform** of outdated, parochial and superstitious Hindu practices.
3. **Rejection of the caste system.**
4. **Female emancipation.**
5. **Improvement of social conditions for the poor.**
6. **Economic progress** for entire nation

## Hinduism in America

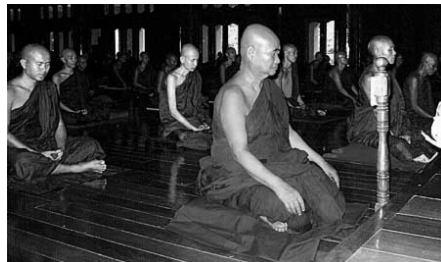
### 5 Basic Types

- 1. Secular Hinduism** - Asian-Indian Hindus who do not follow Hindu practices or particular beliefs yet choose not to join any other religious group.
- 2. Nonsectarian Hinduism** - those who do not identify with a particular branch of Hinduism but who practice a broad, eclectic form of Hinduism that relates to the regions and castes of India from which they come.
- 3. Devotional Hinduism** - those who identify themselves with a particular sectarian traditions such as Vaishnava, Shaiva, or Shakta.

## Hinduism in America

### 5 Basic Types

- 4. Reformist-Nationalist Neo-Hinduism** - those who are followers of groups such as the Ramakrishna Mission.
- 5. Guru-Internationalist-Missionizing Neo-Hinduism** - those Asian Indian Hindus who are followers of groups such as the Transcendental Meditation movement or the Hare Krishna movement.



## Some of the beliefs of traditional Hinduism

### There is no specific, required set of beliefs for a Hindu.

1. **God is one** and He is omnipresent.
2. A person bears the fruits of one's actions, good or bad. As a person sows so shall he reap.
3. **A total surrender** to the will of God. However, a person must put in his/her best effort and leave the result in His hands. A farmer can use the best tools to break the ground, use the best available seeds, protect the crops from insects and animals, but the quantity of crop will be determined if the weather is dry or wet or if there is frost at the time of cutting the crops.

## Some of the things that Hindus believe

4. **Deeds** of the person determine the family and the environment in the next birth.
5. God will always **protect the good** and **punish the bad**.
6. **Service to fellow human beings**, especially the poor and the needy, is the desired way to get closer to God.
7. **Respect for all forms of life**.
8. Consumption of **vegetarian food**.
9. Love and respect for the **elders**.
10. **Honor** mother as you honor God, honor father as you honor God, and honor teacher as you honor God.

## **9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America**

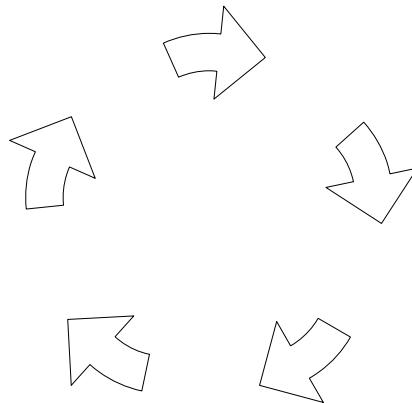
### **1. That there is one, all-pervasive Supreme Being**

God is only one and He is called by different names  
Cows are many but milk is one  
Ornaments are many but gold is one  
Nations are many but earth is one  
Sweets are many but sugar is one  
Beings are many but breath is one  
Highways are many but destination is one

## **9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America**

### **2. That there are "endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution."**

A cyclical view of time and history.



## 9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America

**3. That "all souls are evolving" toward, or seeking, "Moksha" or "liberation."**

There is a deep urge in all living things to be free, or to be released, from the endless cycles of recurring rebirth.

**Liberation means freedom from what binds us, those things that bind us and prevent us from enjoying a peaceful life on earth.**

## 9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America

**4. That there is a "law of cause and effect" known as Karma.**

The term **karma** means **action** and refers to the simple principle that one's life is governed by one's own continuing behavior or practice. In other words, **what one does governs what one will become**, not only from the perspective of human life but from the perspective of the entire hierarchy of living forms.

## **9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America**

### **5. That there is "reincarnation."**

After death there will be 'rebirth', to be followed in due time by another death, to be followed by another rebirth, and so forth. Through endless cycles of recurring time, depending upon one's karmic heritage or trajectory, one might come to be embodied in any number of life forms.

Birth and death cycle is evident in life:

Day dies - night is born

Winter dies - spring is born

Spring dies - summer is born

Summer dies - fall is born

Fall dies - winter is born

This is an endless cycle

## **9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America**

### **6. That there are "divine beings and forces" that require "temple worship" and "personal worship" or puja, in the home.**

Most Asian Indian homes will have a special room, or a shelf or special place, for daily worship and meditation (**puja**). Usually the puja room will have statues or color pictures of various deities (gods and goddesses) and gurus (teachers) from the region in India from which the family comes. Candles and incense will be burned, usually at set times (dawn, evening, and so forth) and prayers will be uttered, interspersed with periods of quiet mediation and sometimes even one or another kind of yoga practice. In Asian families the mother is in charge of the puja room and the daily and seasonal devotional practices in the life of the family.

## **9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America**

**7. That there is a need for an "awakened Master or Sat Guru" (that is, a reliable personal teacher) for one's personal and ethical life.**



## **9 Basic Beliefs of Hindus in America**

**8. That all life is sacred. That one should pursue "ahimsa or non-violence."**

**9. That "no particular religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine religious paths are ... deserving of tolerance and understanding."**

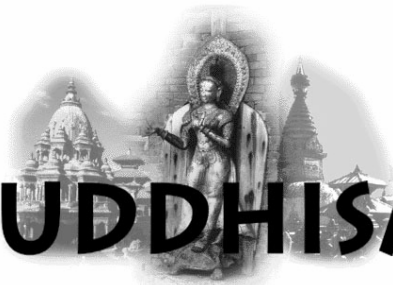
## **Diwali - The Festival of Lights November 1 - 5**

Diwali celebrates the legendary return of a good, ancient king named Lord Rama after 14 years of exile. Diwali also celebrates Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. To celebrate the king's return, many families light oil lamps or candles called diyas.



## **Part 2**

**BUDDHISM**



# **Buddhism**

**To do no evil;**

**To cultivate good;**

**To purify one's mind:**

**This is the teaching of the Buddhas**

- The Dhammapada

## **Overview**

**The Buddha**

**Dharma -**

**The Buddha's Teachings**

**The Four Noble Truths**

**The Eightfold Path**

**Mahayana - The Great Vehicle**

## **Siddhartha Gautama**

### **The Founder of the Buddhist Tradition**

- Born 566BC (approximate).
- Born to wealthy/princely family and raised in palace in southern Nepal.
- Married, had a child.
- When he was 29 years old he saw 4 sights of death and the decay of life that burned into his consciousness.

Saw a sick person, old person, a corpse and finally an ascetic who was attempting to leave this suffering world behind by renouncing the pleasures of ordinary life.

- Left the palace in search of life's meaning – after 6 years of arduous yogic training, he abandoned the way of self-mortification and instead sat in mindful meditation beneath a bodhi tree.

## **The Middle Way**

On the full moon of May, with the rising of the morning star, Siddhartha Gautama became the **Buddha, the enlightened one**. He then wandered the plains of India for 45 years, teaching the **Middle Path** (a path between the way of the flesh, hedonism, and the way of complete denial, asceticism; between materialism and idealism). His enlightenment was the realization that he no longer was subject to the suffering of human life. He became, in other words, a Buddha - someone who has been enlightened, or more accurately, one who **had "woken up" from the sleep of ignorance that binds people in the suffering of this world.**

In approximately 486 BC, at the age of 80, the Buddha died.

His last words are said to be:

**Impermanent are all created things;**

**Strive on with awareness.**

## **Buddhism and God**

Buddha is not a substitute for God. For centuries, Buddhists have resisted the idea that the universe is governed by a creator God. There is nothing but a cycle of reincarnation and a man whose example made it possible for his followers to find their way out. In this respect, Buddhism is genuinely an atheistic religion, a religion that does not presuppose the existence of God.

## Reincarnation

Buddhism is rooted in **reincarnation**, which in turn is determined by **karma**.

People who perform good actions are rewarded in future lives (perhaps by being reborn in the heaven of one of the myriad Indian gods) while bad actions are punished with birth as an animal, an insect, etc.

## Reincarnation

Reincarnation (or transmigration) is:

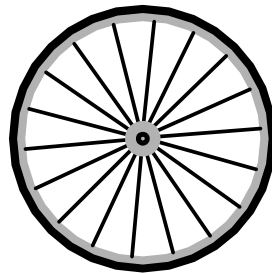
1. **fundamental** - **it is a basic assumption**
2. **burdensome** - life goes on and on and on, there are millions of lives, so reincarnation is the frustration of human hopes. No matter how good life is, it is destined to slip away.

Buddha set out to find a solution, a path across the ocean of death and rebirth. His teaching, the **Dharma**, is meant to chart a path out of suffering and into an experience of **freedom from the endless cycle of rebirth**.

## Dharma: The Buddha's Teaching

After his awakening beneath the Bodhi Tree Buddha met with some friends and began to tell them of his awakening. This act of teaching is called "**the first turning of the wheel of Dharma**" and has come to represent the moment when the Buddha set the Buddhist tradition in motion. **The wheel is the symbol for Buddhism.**

In his first teaching,  
he taught  
**The 4 Noble Truths.**



## The Four Noble Truths

### 1. Life is suffering.

All things are impermanent including living things like ourselves. All things are separate, no one or no thing has a separate existence, all are interconnected.

### 2. Suffering is due to attachment.

Attachment is common translation for the word **trishna**, which literally means thirst and is also translated as desire, clinging, greed, craving, or lust. Because we are imperfect/impermanent and not separate, we are forever "clinging" to things, each other, and ourselves, in a mistaken effort at permanence.

## The Four Noble Truths

### 3. Attachment can be overcome.

**Nirvana**, which literally means "blowing out," refers to the **letting go** of clinging, hatred, and ignorance, and the full acceptance of imperfection, impermanence, and interconnectedness.

### 4. There is a path for accomplishing this.

The path is called **dharma** - the middle way.

## The Middle Way

elaborated as the **Eightfold Path**

These two are referred to as **prajna**, or **wisdom**.

1. **Right View** is the true understanding of the four noble truths.

2. **Right Aspiration** is true desire to be free from attachment / ignorance / hatred.

## **The Middle Way** elaborated as the **Eightfold Path**

These three are referred to as **shila**, or **morality**.

**3. Right speech** involves not lying, gossiping, or hurtful talk.

**4. Right action** involves abstaining from harmful behaviors (killing, stealing, careless sex).

**5. Right livelihood** means making your living in such a way so as to avoid dishonesty and hurting others, including animals.

## **The Middle Way** elaborated as the **Eightfold Path**

These last three are known as **samadhi**, or **meditation**.

**6. Right effort** - an act of the will that fosters self-discipline, honesty, benevolence, and kindness.

**7. Right mindedness** is the focusing of one's attention on one's body, feelings, thoughts and consciousness in such a way as to overcome craving, hatred and ignorance.

**8. Right concentration** is meditating in such a way as to understand imperfection, impermanence, and non-separateness.

## **Mahayana: The Great Vehicle**

**Four centuries** after the Buddha's death, there is a **radical reinterpretation** of the story. This new teaching, called the "**second turning of the wheel**" shifts attention back from the final life of the Buddha toward the previous lives that prepared for the Buddha's nirvana.

## **Mahayana: The Great Vehicle**

**Emphasis** not on final stage, but on **becoming**, on putting yourself in a position to become enlightened. Enormous differences for what it meant to be Buddhist:

1. Person did not have to become a monk. **Laypeople** could be as good or better than any "religious" person.
2. No longer focus exclusively on the virtue of wisdom. Must act for the welfare of others. **Compassion now married to wisdom.**

## Mahayana: The Great Vehicle

3. Worship not limited to human bodhisattvas who struggled in this world to follow Buddha's example, but came to worship **celestial bodhisattvas who could intervene and help mortals** in difficult times.

Avalokitesvara is an example. His mantra, "The Lord Who Looks Down," is particularly important in Tibet; it is carved on rocks, written on flags, inscribed in **prayer wheels** so that with every spin of the wheel, the country is filled with limbs of Avalokitesvara's compassion. In China, Avalokitesvara took the female form of Kuan-yin, the mother of compassion, who functioned in many ways like the Virgin Mary in Roman Catholic countries.

4. Doctrine of "**emptiness**," which states that everything is an illusion, or is "empty" of any identity. **Zen**-Japanese; **Taoism**-China.

## Buddhism Today

**Thervada** (Teaching of the Elders) continues traditional Buddhism. Southeast Asian countries, such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia follow Thervada.

Northerly countries of Asia - China, Japan, Korea, Tibet - were deeply influenced by **Mahayana**.

In **India**, the Buddhist impulse eventually ran its course and died out.

**350 million people**, mostly in Asia, identify themselves as Buddhists. Approximately half a million people in the U.S. identify themselves as Buddhists.

**"...Buddha, a man whose serenity and quiet smile have for centuries symbolized the human aspiration for peace in the midst of suffering and the wisdom to see through the illusions of this world."**

Malcolm David Eckel

## **Other Faiths Other Traditions**

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### **The American Religions**

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|-------------|---|
| November 8  | The End of the World Religions –<br>Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah<br>Witnesses             |
| November 15 | New Made-in-America Religions –<br>The Latter Day Saints (Mormons)<br>and Church of Scientology |