
UNIT 4: PANTHEISM

LESSON 3: HINDUISM



THE FOUR BIG QUESTIONS

- Creation: I have always been; I am going through a cycle of karma. The physical world was not created; it is an illusion
- Fall: Human sin is caused by ignorance of Oneness. Evil comes from failure to realize that what is seen is an illusion.
- Redemption: one must detach oneself from passion in action. One can burn off negative karma by work with a satgura (an advanced spiritual teacher)
- Eternity: The goal of life is liberation from samsara (the cycle of rebirths). Liberation can't be achieved unless a person rises above the law of karma.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Brahman:** the Oneness; the totality of which all things are parts. It has shown itself at different times and in different ways.
- **maya:** the illusion of this world
- **Krishna:** also called Vishnu; the Hindu god who is the embodiment of supreme reality

KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Brahma:** one of the primary gods of Hinduism; the creator god
- **Puranas:** popular texts that serve as scripture for the average Hindu

BASICS OF THE HINDU WORLDVIEW

- Hinduism is by definition a collection of ways, all of which ultimately lead to the same place
- The goal of a Hindu's life is liberation from the cycle of rebirths. Liberation cannot be achieved until all karmas are balanced and the individual rises above the law of karma.
- A good life is rewarded to rebirth into a better state, and a bad life results in rebirth into a lower state

BASICS OF THE HINDU WORLDVIEW

- An individual can gain liberation from karma by practicing duty, spiritual discipline, and devotion
- To a Hindu, living rightly means detaching oneself from passion in action. When one feels passion, he or she is creating new karma which must be dealt with in the future.

The Indian caste system

