

Hinduism

The Divinity in All



Discuss:

Where/when do you find yourself most in touch with God?

The One and the Many – inherent pluralism (Vedic culture)

“The wise speak of the One in many ways.”

Divinity is in everything

Namaste – “the divine in me greets the divine in you”



Legal definition according to Indian law:

Acceptance of the Vedas with reverence; recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse; and realization of the truth that the number of gods to be worshipped is large.



Aditi

Devi
Shakti



Vishnu



RadhaKrishna



Shiva



Ganesha



Four Vedas:

Oldest Sanskrit texts, some of the oldest written texts of all

Rig Veda – hymns (~1500 BCE?) *Sama Veda* – Rig Veda hymns for liturgy

Yajur Veda – sacrificial formulas

Atharva Veda – practical daily formulas and mantras

Brahman – universal, absolute Reality (objective)

Atman – individual, experiential Reality (subjective)

The spiritual goal is to reintegrate the two.

Hindu gods are the representations of the divine in various forms (*avatars*)

Worship: devotion and meditation (*mantras*)

Mutual seeing of Atman and Brahman – so *prasad* (sacrifice) is first offered, then offered back

Discuss:

What of this sounds or feels at all familiar – in dynamics, if not in detail?

Interlude: the Abbott & Costello moment

The Rig Veda asks: *Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it?*

Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation?

Who knows whence it has arisen? (10.129.6)

The Brahmanas (interpretations of the Rig Veda) created a god, "Ka" (=Who)

Of Water and Cows

Creation myths recognize power of water to nurture and destroy

Ganges; *Triveni Sangam* –confluence of Ganges w/ Yamuna & Sarasvati

Cows offer humans five gifts and epitomize peaceful life to respect

Hindu Life Goals

Dharma – ethical living; righteousness; following the path

Artha – material enjoyment/wealth; success in political/civic life

Kama – physical and aesthetic enjoyment (the *Kama Sutra*)

Moksha – release from *Samsara*, the cycle of re-birth in suffering

Hindu Paths (*marqa / yoga*)

Bhakti – devotion *Jnana* – wisdom *Karma* – works *Raja* – meditation

Western Hinduism (esp. in the US)

19th-c. Transcendentalists and Theosophists

20th-c. rational/scientific

Vedanta Society – Sri Vivekenanda, 1893, the *Bhagavad Gita*

Transcendental Meditation – Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1959

Traditional discipline

Hare Krishna – Bhaktivedanta, 1965

Questions for Rohit Kunte (communal leader, Hindu Temple of the Quad Cities):

The HAF blog (Hindu American Foundation): <https://www.hafsite.org/blog/>

Community visit: Saturday, 20 July, 10:00 am – Hindu Temple of the Quad Cities

9801 14th St. West, Rock Island

Number: 108 – symbolized, in who or parts, the completeness and integration of the world. Whether numbering all the great yogis, gurus, and saints of Hinduism, constituting the beads in an ideal prayer japamala, or embracing creating, fulfillment, and eternity, it envelops Hindu life in its mysteries.

Color: **Saffron** – stands for self-denial and the quest for life and salvation